

The Franciscan Mission Architecture of Alta California

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By

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PREFACE



IN studying the sources of design in architecture, it is seldom that a chance is given to Americans to examine the original buildings themselves without crossing the water, and among the limited sources within our own boundaries there is no class of buildings more interesting than the missions built in the Southwest by the monks of the Franciscan Order. So many elements combine themselves in these buildings that the architect can find among them precedents for the design of a church, a school, a residence, a workshop, or, if he desires, all of these well connected and charmingly related.

The purpose of the writer in making the present series of studies was to assist, in a practical way, the cause of architecture by recording by means of notes, drawings and photographs, the real spirit and detail of these buildings, so well adapted and appropriate to the land of their inception, before the last vestige of the buildings themselves had disappeared from the earth. The writer was convinced that many architects were designing in the style who had never seen a mission, and that many more were designing in the style who, if they had ever seen the old buildings, were making poor interpretation of the spirit in which they were erected.

The study has extended over four years, during which time the author has made accurate and detailed drawings, sketches and photographs of the existing ruins. In connection with this research he is under obligation to many students in his classes for help in making the surveys and especially to his photographers, Messrs. Putnam and Valentine of Los Angeles, for many favors rendered and efficient labors performed.

The plates and photographs are almost self-explanatory. The letters in script on the various plates were copied from manuscript books to be found now in the various old mission libraries and represent, quite as much as the building details, the thought and spirit of the padres. It is believed that the plates, although not exhaustive, represent a fairly well-rounded series for use in architects' offices and it is hoped that they will fill that need so clearly apparent at the present time.

Long Beach, California

June 1, 1916

REXFORD NEWCOMB

HISTORICAL NOTE



WHILE our forefathers were building fast and strong the foundations of our national life upon the eastern coast and expressing that love for liberty and freedom in a free use of the Georgian style, those pioneers of the West, the soldiers and sailors of old Spain, together with the padres of the Franciscan Order, were conquering the country of the Pacific for Christ and the crown. The buildings erected by these padres express, in a similar manner, the culture and civilization that they heralded in the land and are no less interesting and just as important architecturally and historically as the Colonial of the Atlantic Seaboard.

To be sure, these old buildings do not represent the same variety of design or elaborateness of detail found in the more populous cities of Mexico or even in Texas and Arizona, yet they stand as concrete reminders of Spanish occupation and admirable examples of buildings conceived in the style and manner appropriate to the country in which they were built. And thus far they command the attention and respect of all architects and designers of the present day and offer many fine suggestions for modern buildings with similar requirements.

Alta California of the Spanish days extended from San Diego on the south to Sonoma, just beyond San Francisco Bay, on the north, and this stretch of coast land, something over five hundred miles in length, was covered by a chain of mission establishments, situated about a day's journey apart along the old coast trail known as El Camino Real (the Royal Road). The first mission was established at San Diego in 1769 by Father Junipero Serra, president of the missions; the second, San Carlos, was located on Monterey Bay in 1770, while the intervening territory was covered as years went on, so that by 1823 the chain of twenty-one missions, together with several asistencias, or contributing chapels, was complete. A complete list of the establishments with their dates of foundation is given herewith. The locations may be determined on the map, Plate I.

1	Mission	San Diego de Alcala	July	16, 1769
2	"	San Carlos de Monterey	June	3, 1770
3	"	San Antonio de Padua	July	14, 1771
4	"	San Gabriel, Archangel	Sept.	8, 1771
5	"	San Luis Obispo de Toulouse	Sept.	1, 1772
6	"	San Francisco de Asís	Oct.	9, 1776
7	"	San Juan Capistrano	Nov.	1, 1776

8	Mission	Santa Clara de Asís	Jan. 18, 1777
9	"	San Buenaventura	Mar. 21, 1782
10	"	Santa Barbara	Dec. 4, 1786
11	"	La Purísima Concepción	Dec. 8, 1787
12	"	Santa Cruz	Aug. 28, 1791
13	"	Nuestra Señora La Soledad	Oct. 9, 1797
14	"	San José	June 11, 1797
15	"	San Juan Bautista	June 24, 1797
16	"	San Miguel, Archangel	July 25, 1797
17	"	San Fernando, Rey de España	Sept. 8, 1797
18	"	San Luis, Rey de Francia	June 13, 1798
19	"	Santa Inés	Sept. 17, 1804
20	"	San Rafael, Archangel	Dec. 14, 1817
21	"	San Francisco de Solano	April 25, 1823

Of course the purpose of the establishments was to Christianize and civilize the Indian population and to this end each mission establishment was in charge of two priests, one of whom superintended the manual labors, the teaching of the arts, and managed the farm, while the other attended to the spiritual needs and book learning of the Indians. The education of the Indian was of two kinds, namely: training in the various occupations and crafts like weaving, tanning, shoe-making, grain, fruit and cattle raising, and the book learning such as the Spanish language, Christian doctrine and singing.

The daily routine at any one of the missions was something of the following nature: The Angelus at sunrise called the Indians who lived about the mission to assembly in the chapel, where they were required to attend morning prayers and mass and receive religious instruction. After mass breakfast was served, after which all went to their work. At eleven o'clock dinner was eaten, after which they rested until 2 P. M., when work was resumed and continued until an hour before sunset, when the Angelus bell was rung again. After prayers and the rosary, the evening meal was eaten and the Indians were free to dance or indulge in any other harmless amusement.

The young Indian women were not allowed to reside in the family huts, but were kept in a convent under the charge of a trusted Indian matron, who was responsible for their welfare and education in the crafts. They were not allowed to leave the convent until they had been won by Indian youths and were ready to marry. The courtship took place through the barred window as in Spain and Mexico. After marriage they settled down in a hut among the other Indian families.

The missions, in addition to great fields, pastures for sheep, cattle and horse raising and gardens for vegetables, had rose and flower gardens and orchards of

fruit. Flour mills were operated at several missions, in some cases by water. Irrigation was practised and elaborate dams and flumes of masonry are still extant to vouch for their engineering ability. In several cases fountains were supplied with running water from the mountains, as were great washing vats and bath houses.

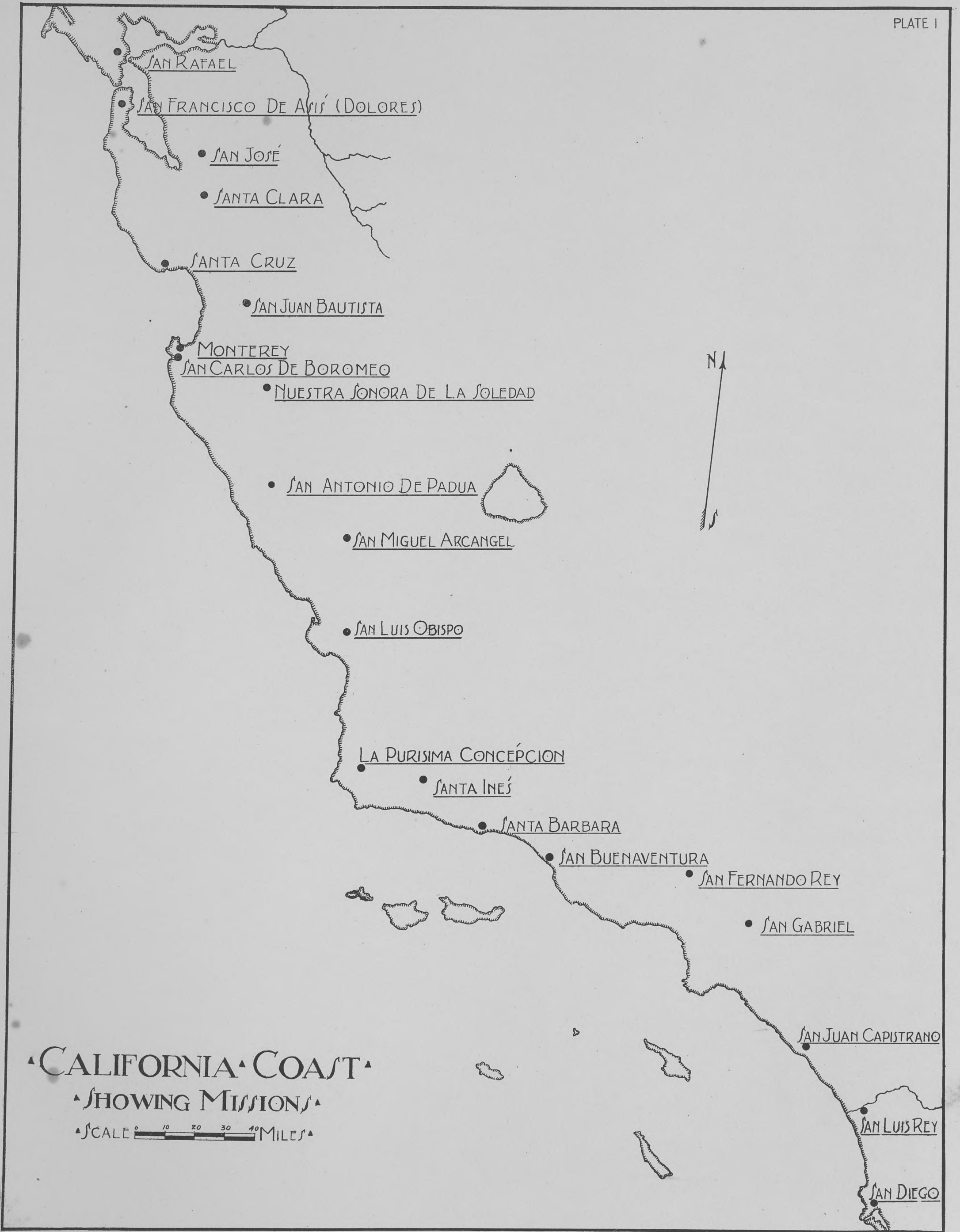
To meet the requirements placed upon it the building for a mission must be especially designed. Since there were no architects in the country and few, if any, artisans (usually craftsmen of any variety had to be brought from Mexico), the padres themselves were obliged to design and superintend the construction of the buildings. The mission system required, first of all of course, a church, then priests' quarters, shops for workmen, servants' and soldiers' quarters, convent for the young women, guest rooms, store rooms, refectory, kitchen, etc. The priests must have supervision and access at all times and the establishment must be capable of protection from attacks from without. Hence the arrangement around an open court or patio seemed the solution. This is the plan of all missions that had any pretensions at all. The patio served a very utilitarian purpose and at the same time had an admirable artistic purpose in unifying the plan. In case of attack from without all could be gathered into the patio for protection, and in the hey-day of the mission period (1800 to 1822) the patio at any mission presented, no doubt, an appearance, ever, of vari-colored activity. On the plan of San Juan Capistrano, Plate II, will be noted the relation of the patio to the general mission layout. It will be seen that here was the centre of mission private life, while the plaza was the centre of community social life. On the plaza were located the priests' quarters, soldiers' quarters, refectory, guest-rooms and offices, while the servants' quarters, refectory, kitchen, larders, storehouses and shops flanked the patio.

The features that characterize the style may be summarized as follows:

1. Patio plan with garden or fountain.
2. Solid and massive walls, piers and buttresses.
3. Arched corridors.
4. Curved, pedimented gables.
5. Terraced bell-towers, with dome and lantern.
6. Pierced belfries.
7. Wide, projecting eaves.
8. Broad, undecorated, wall surfaces.
9. Low, sloping, red-tile roofs.

Examples of these characteristics are shown by photograph and drawing. Several selections from the Arizonian variety of the style have been included for comparative purposes.

In conclusion, it can be said that these buildings exhibit unusually fine proportions, obtained in spite of poor materials, lack of skilled workmen and rude implements. In view of the fact that these buildings were designed by laymen, it seems wonderful that such charming results should have been obtained.

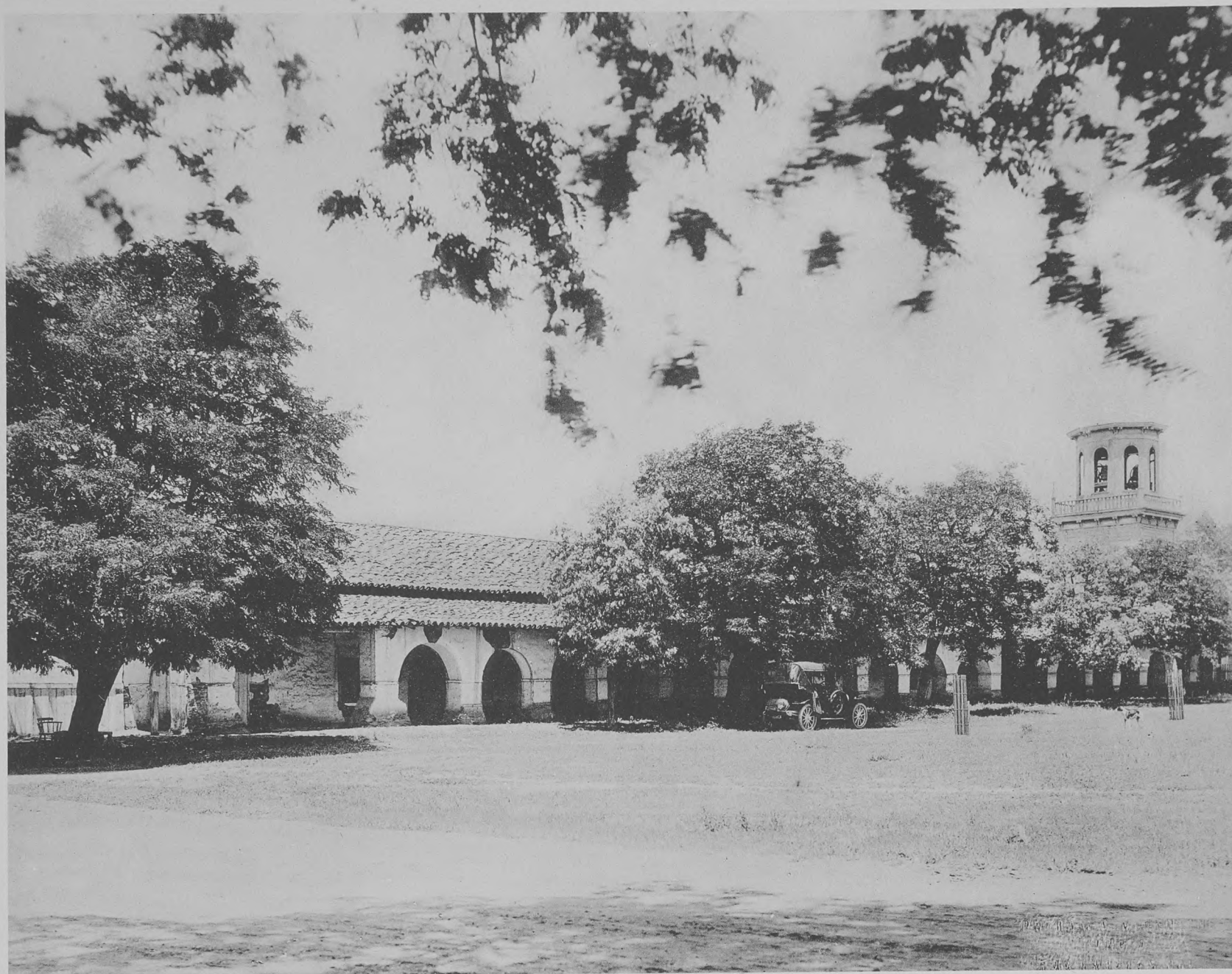




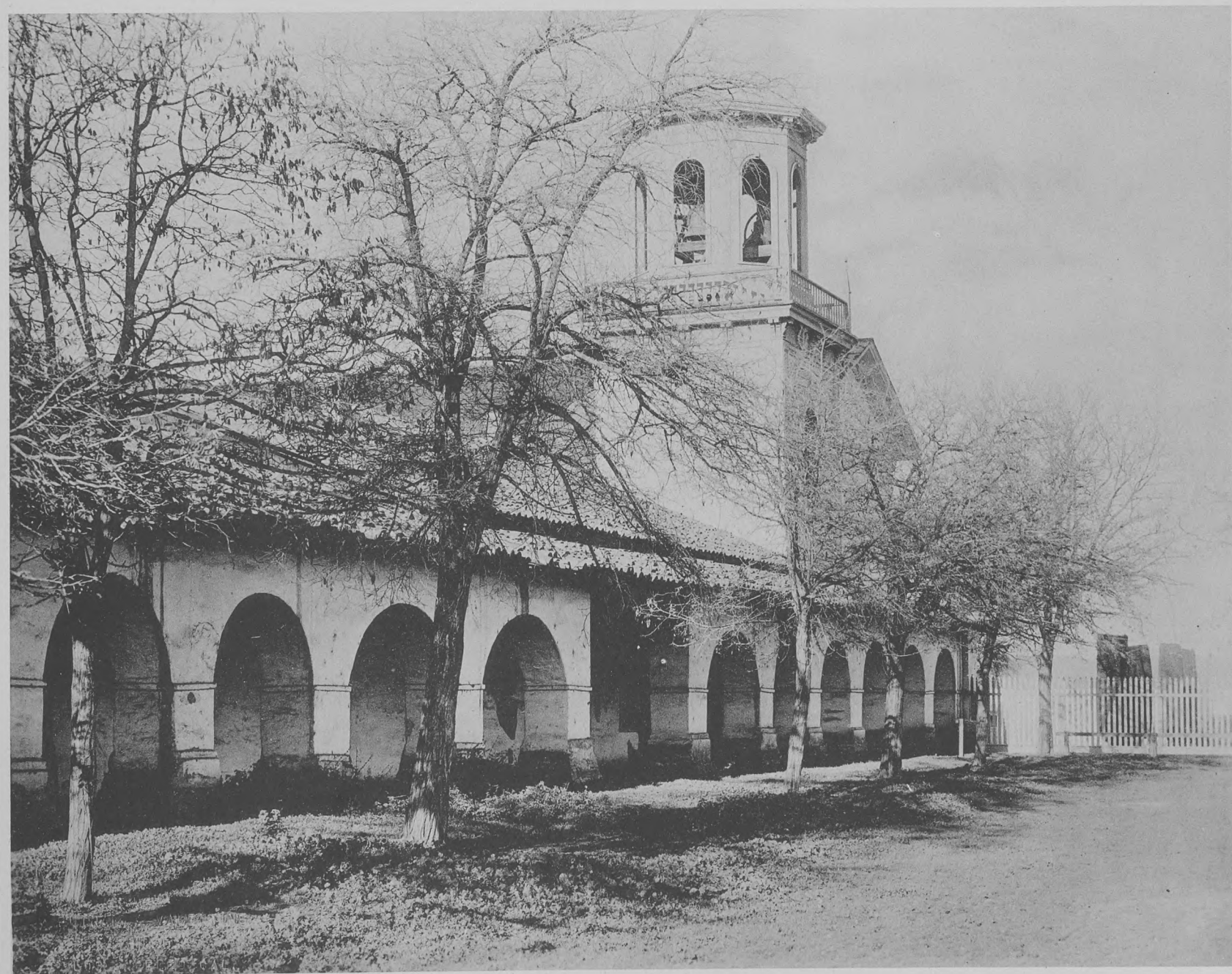
LA PURISSIMA CONCEPCION MISSION



SAN MIGUEL, ARCANGEL - CORRIDOR



SAN JUAN BAUTISTA - MISSION



SAN JUAN BAUTISTA - MISSION



SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA - MISSION

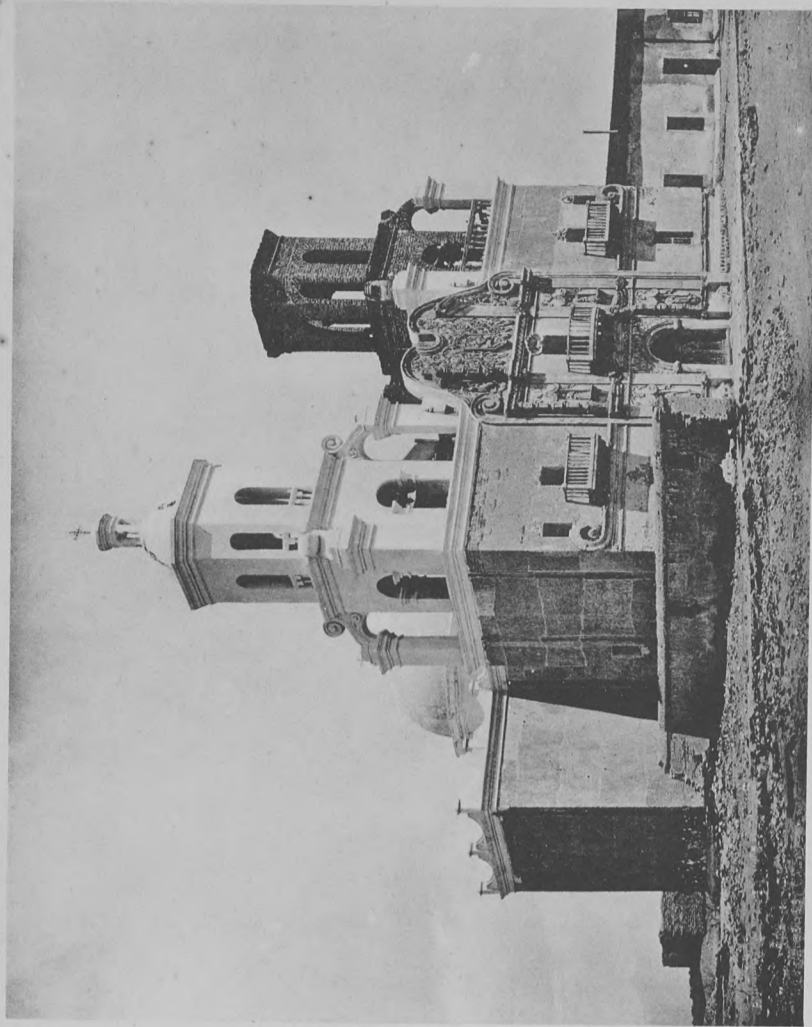


SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA - RUINED CHURCH

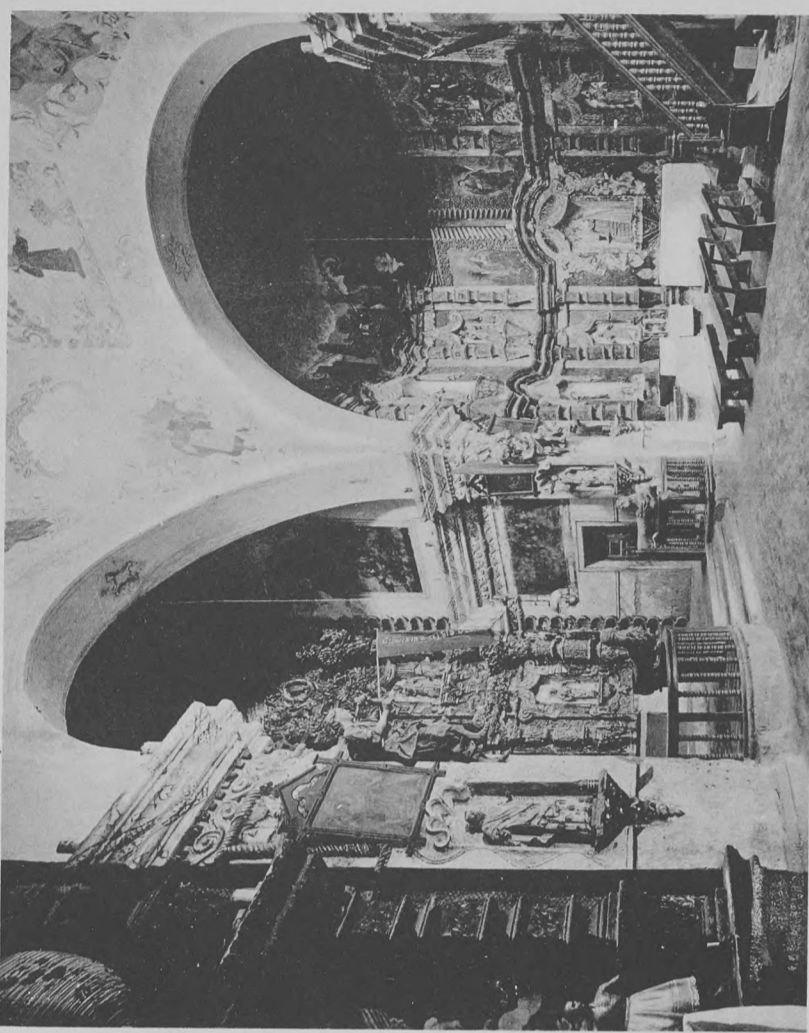
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



SAN XAVIER DEL BAC, ARIZONA - FACADE



SAN XAVIER DEL BAC, ARIZONA - CHURCH



SAN XAVIER DEL BAC, ARIZONA - INTERIOR





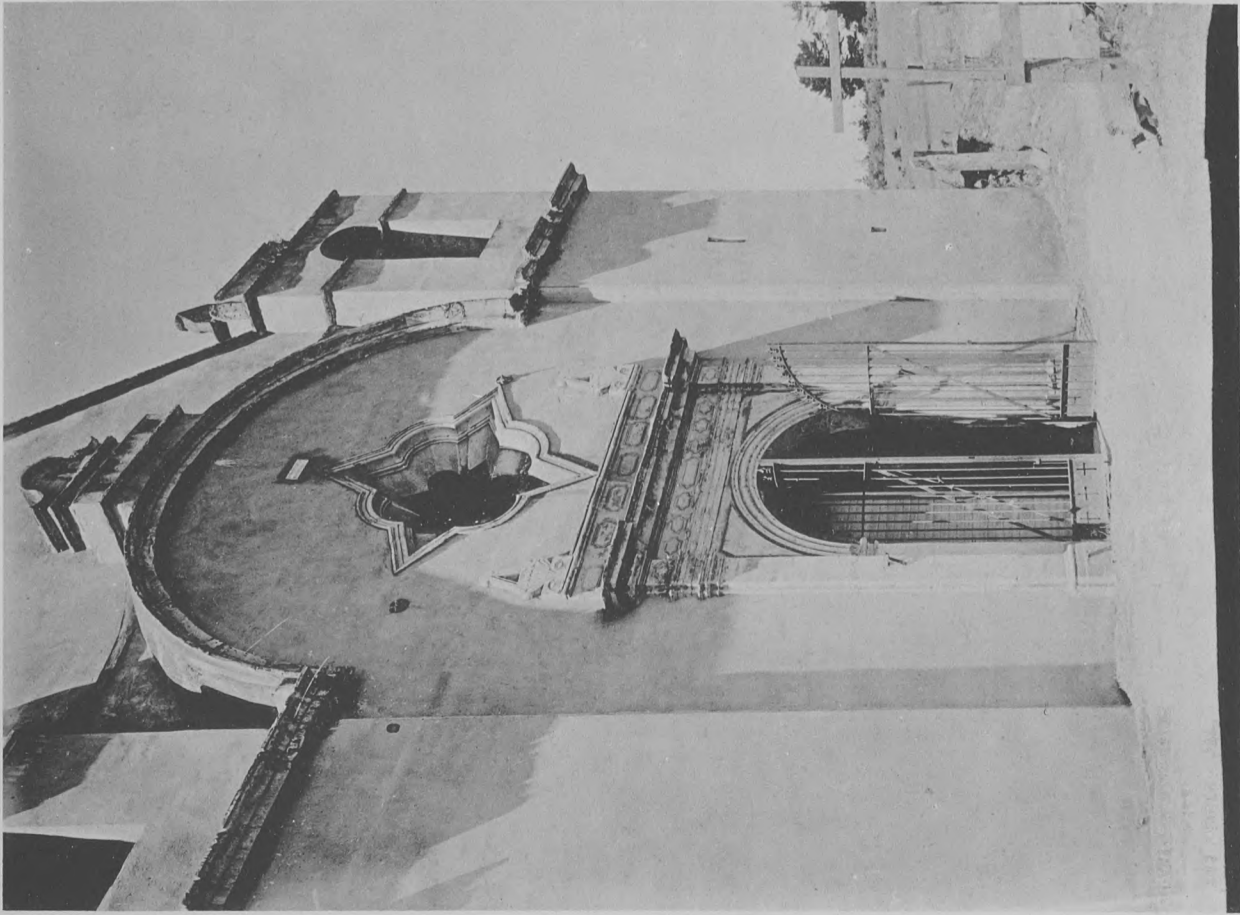
SAN CARLOS DE MONTEREY
FACADE



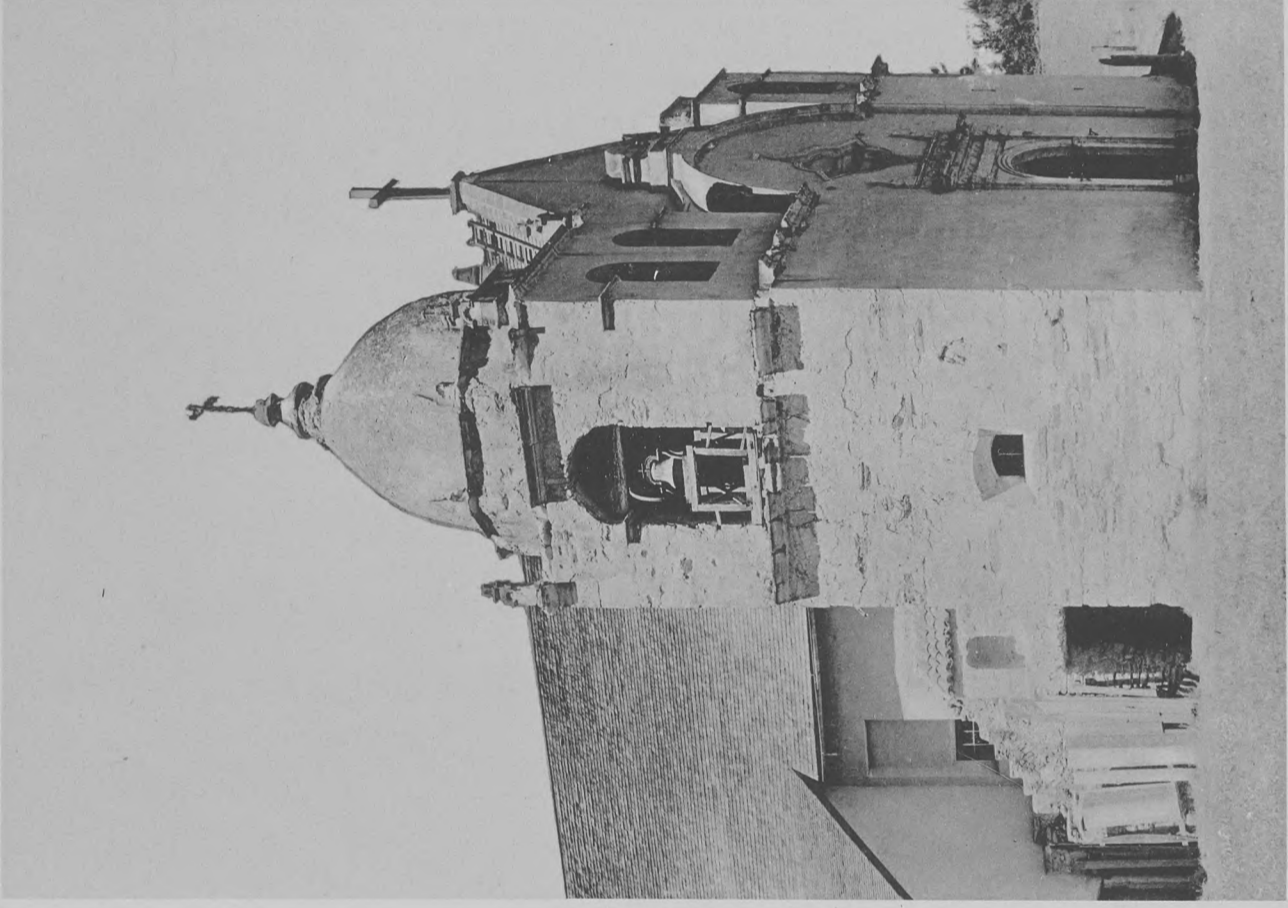
SAN CARLOS DE MONTEREY
DETAIL OF FACADE



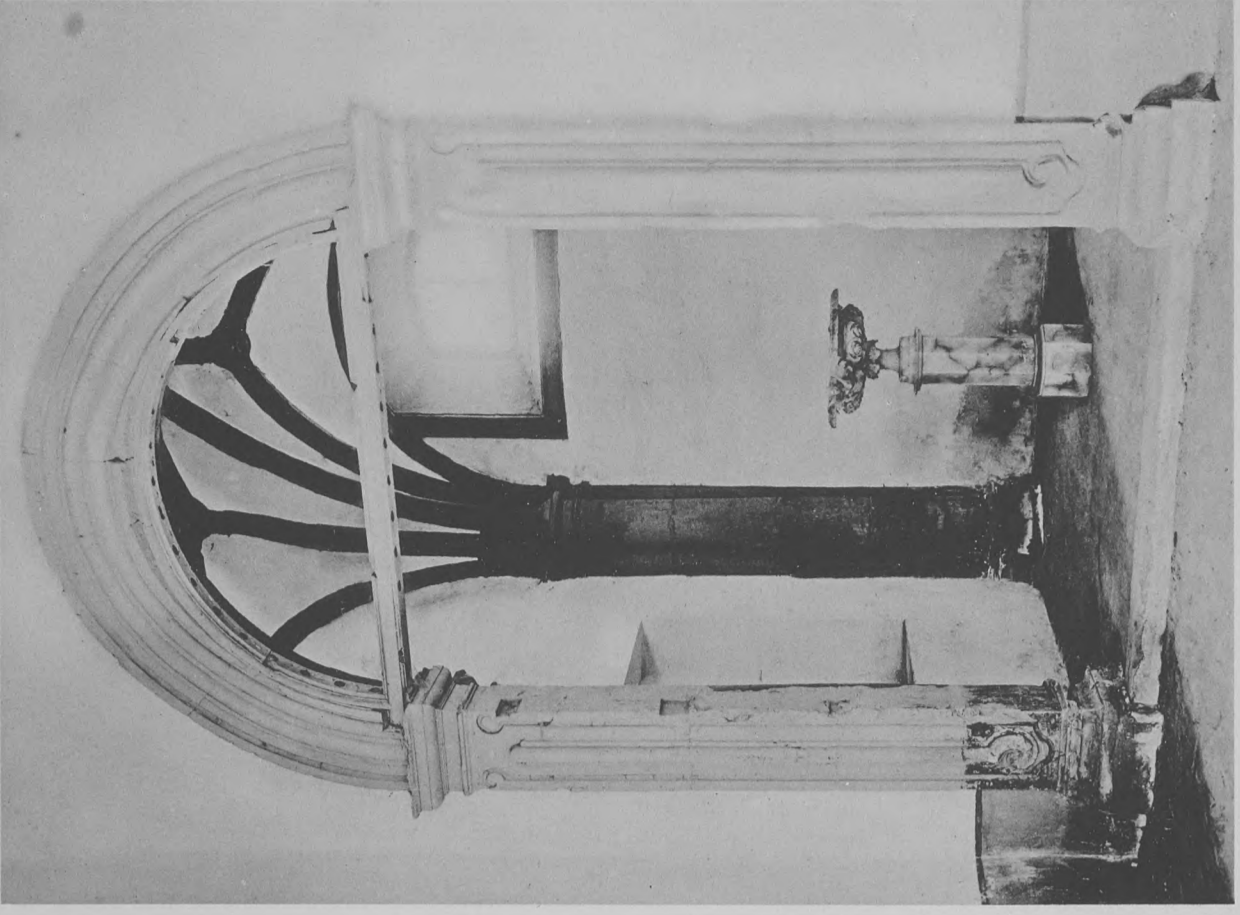
SAN CARLOS (CARMEL) CHURCH



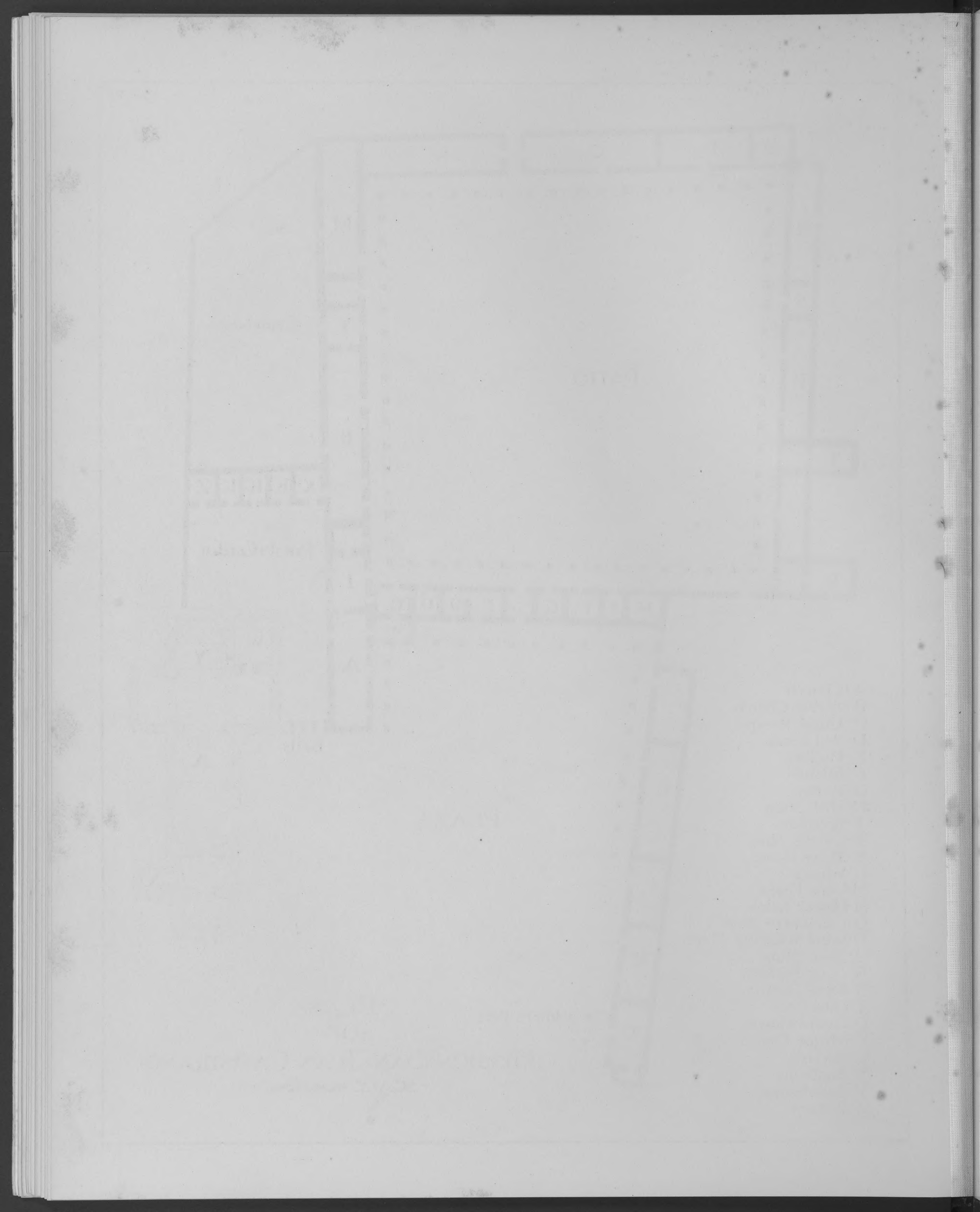
SAN CARLOS (CARMEL) FACADE

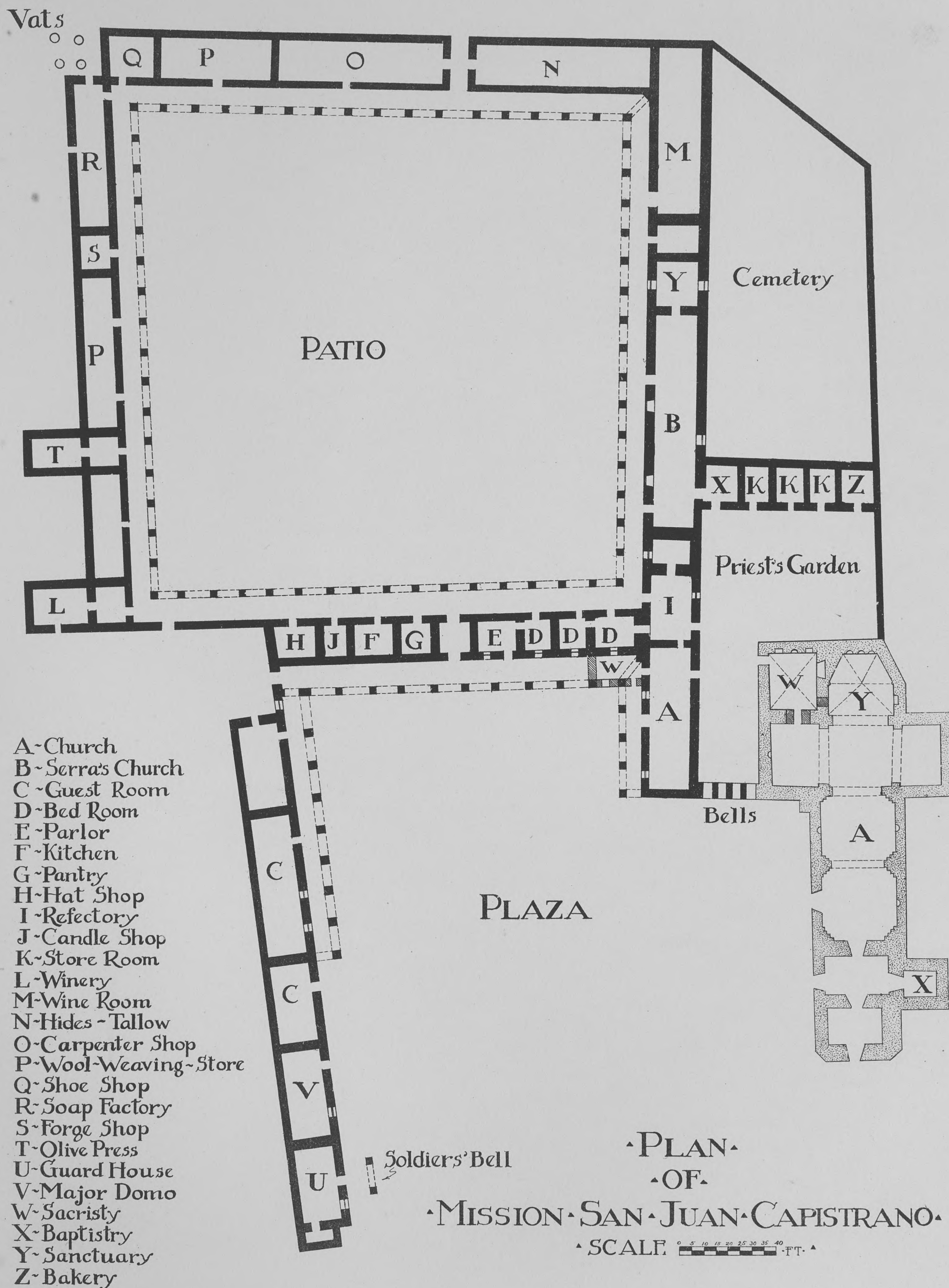


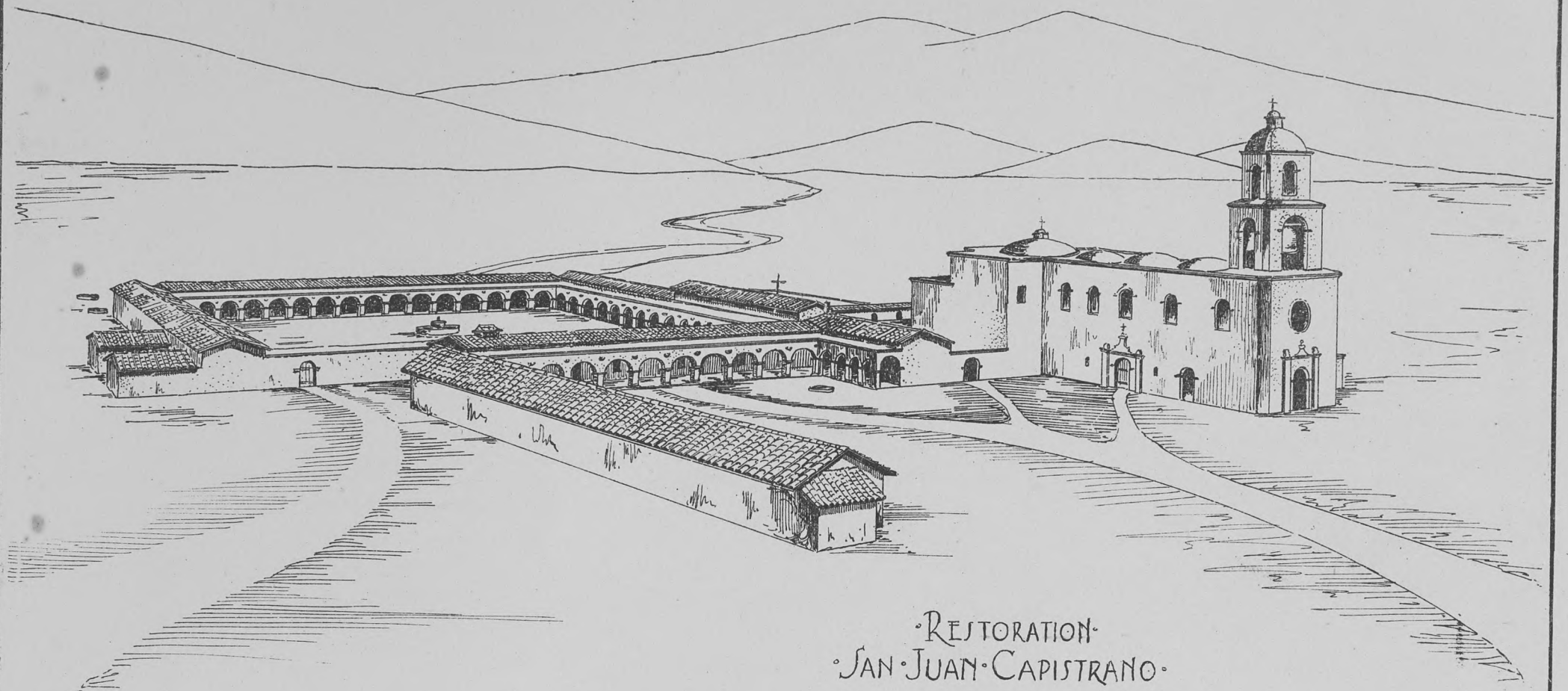
SAN CARLOS (CARMEL) CAMPANILE



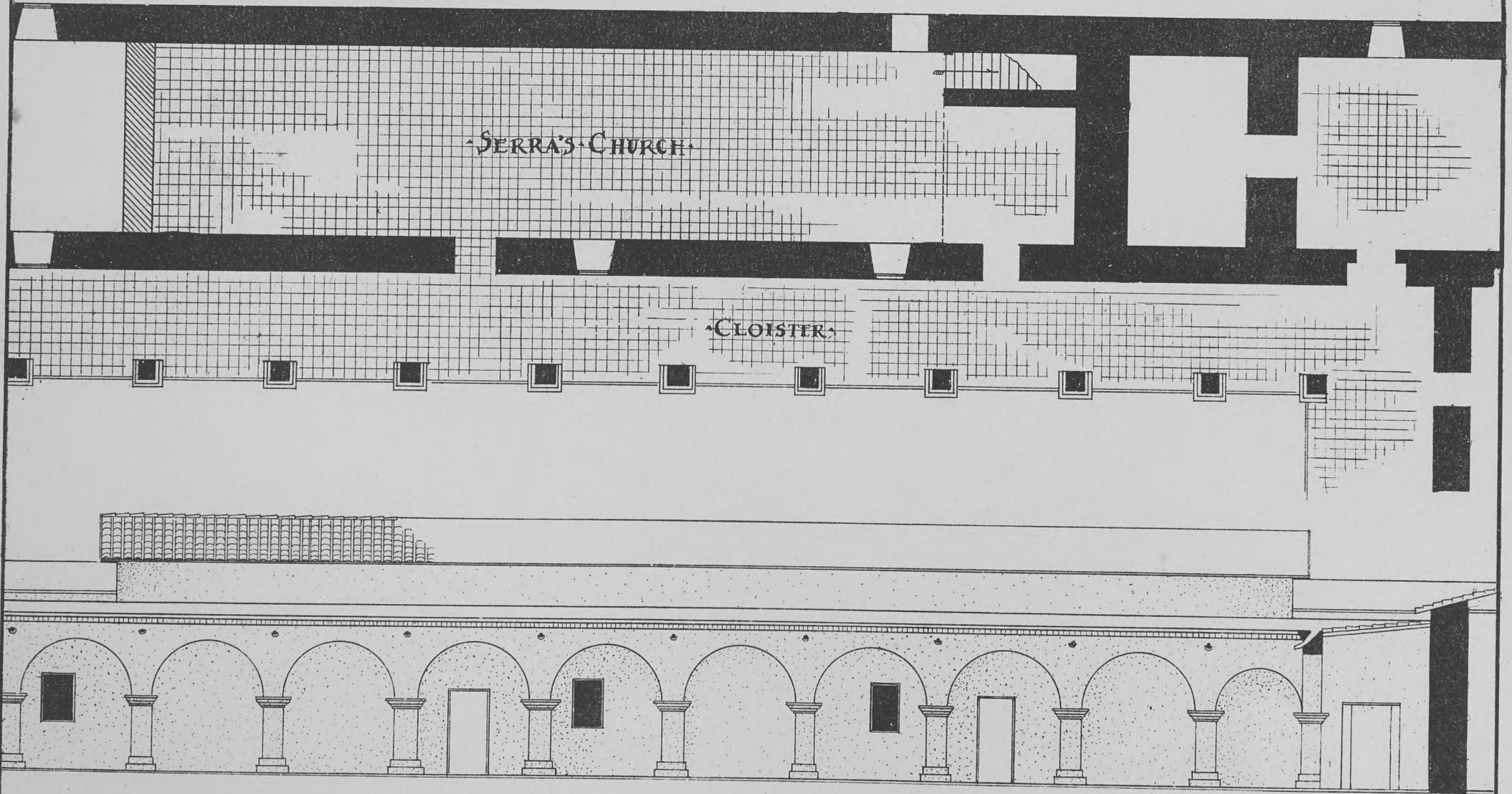
SAN CARLOS (CARMEL) FONT







RESTORATION
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
-R. Sewcomb-



SERRA'S CHURCH

CLOISTER

PATIO
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

SCALE 12 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FT



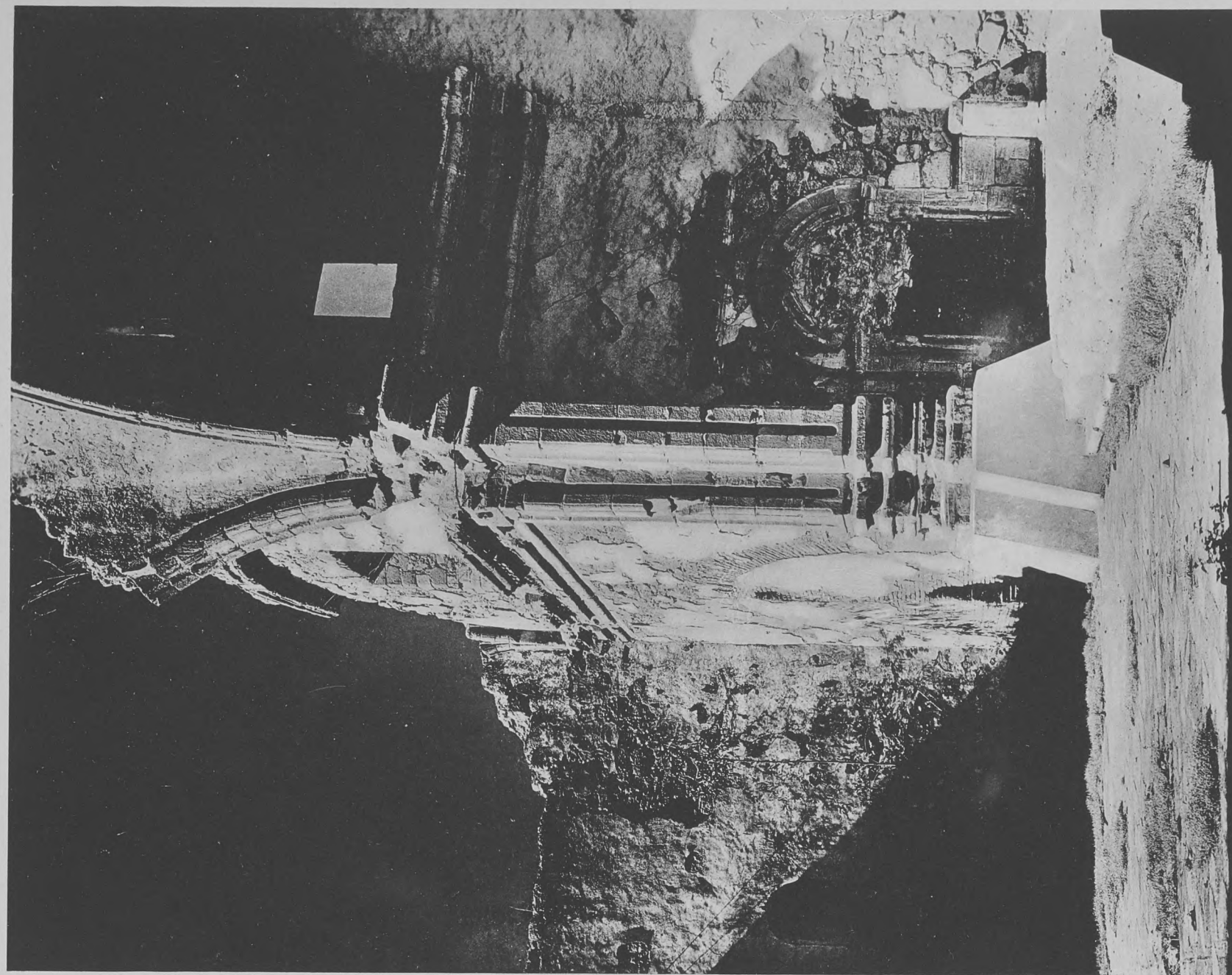
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO - FRONT CORRIDORS



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO - RUINED ARCHES

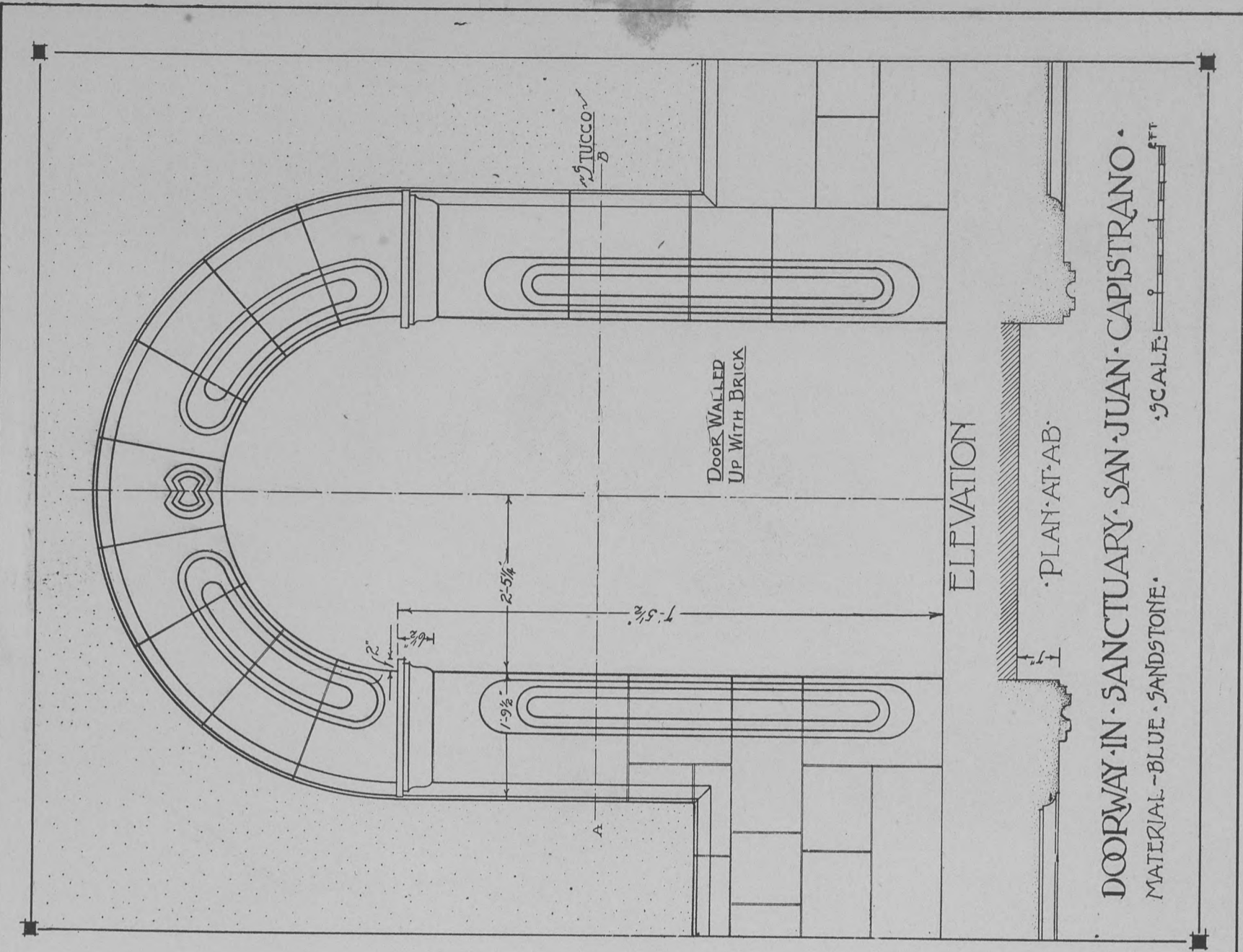
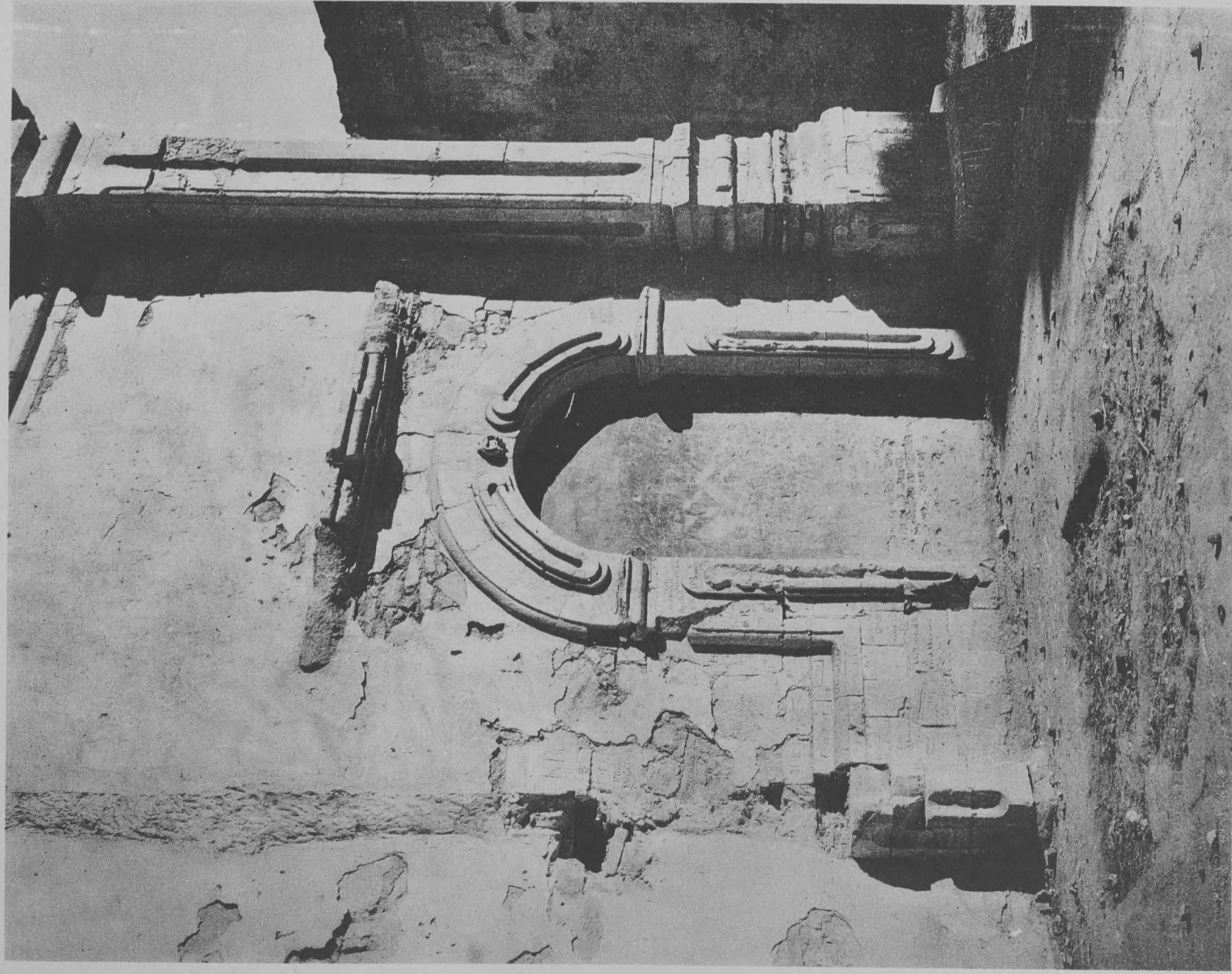


MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
PLAZA-LOOKING TOWARD PRESENT CHAPEL



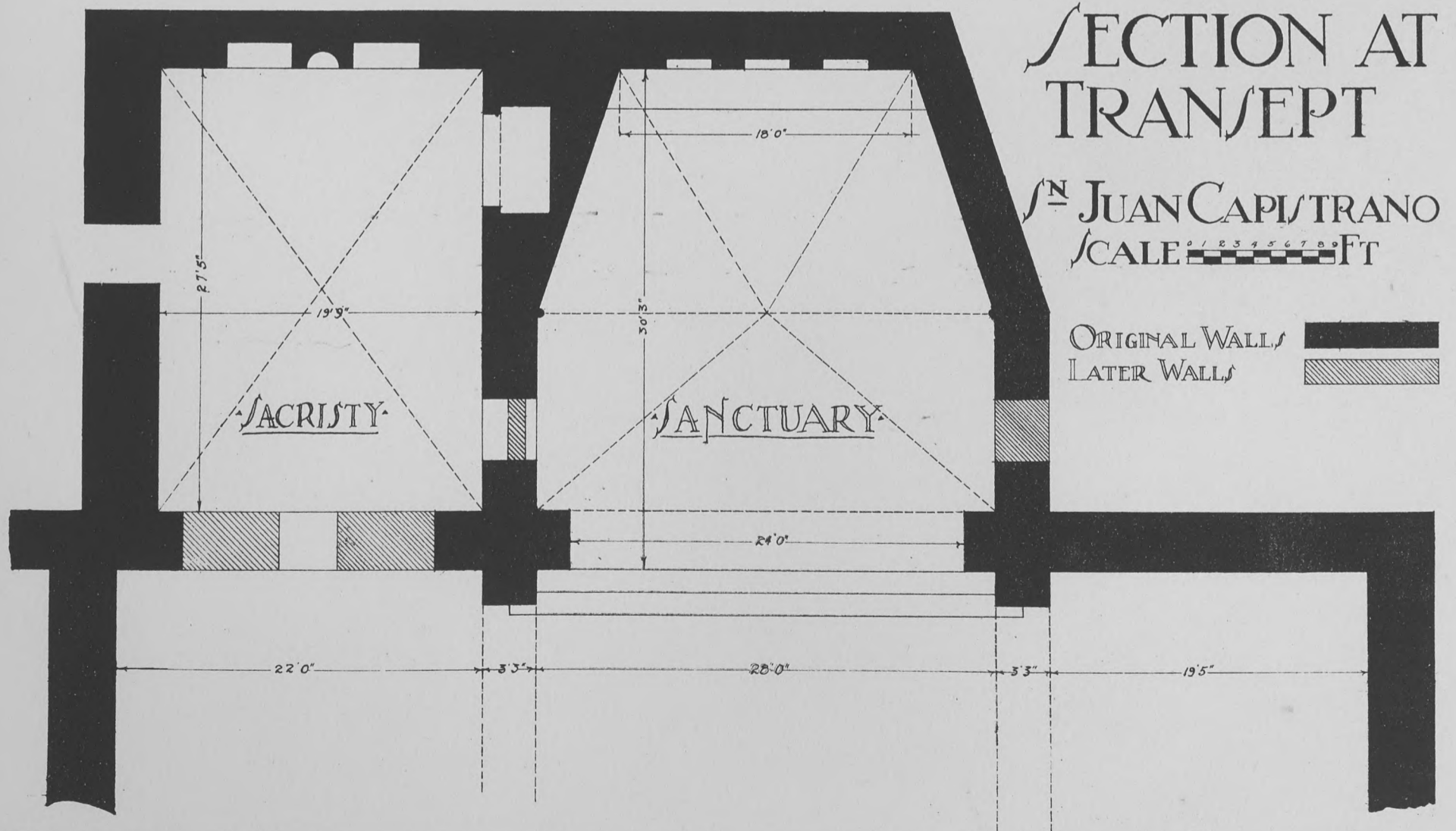
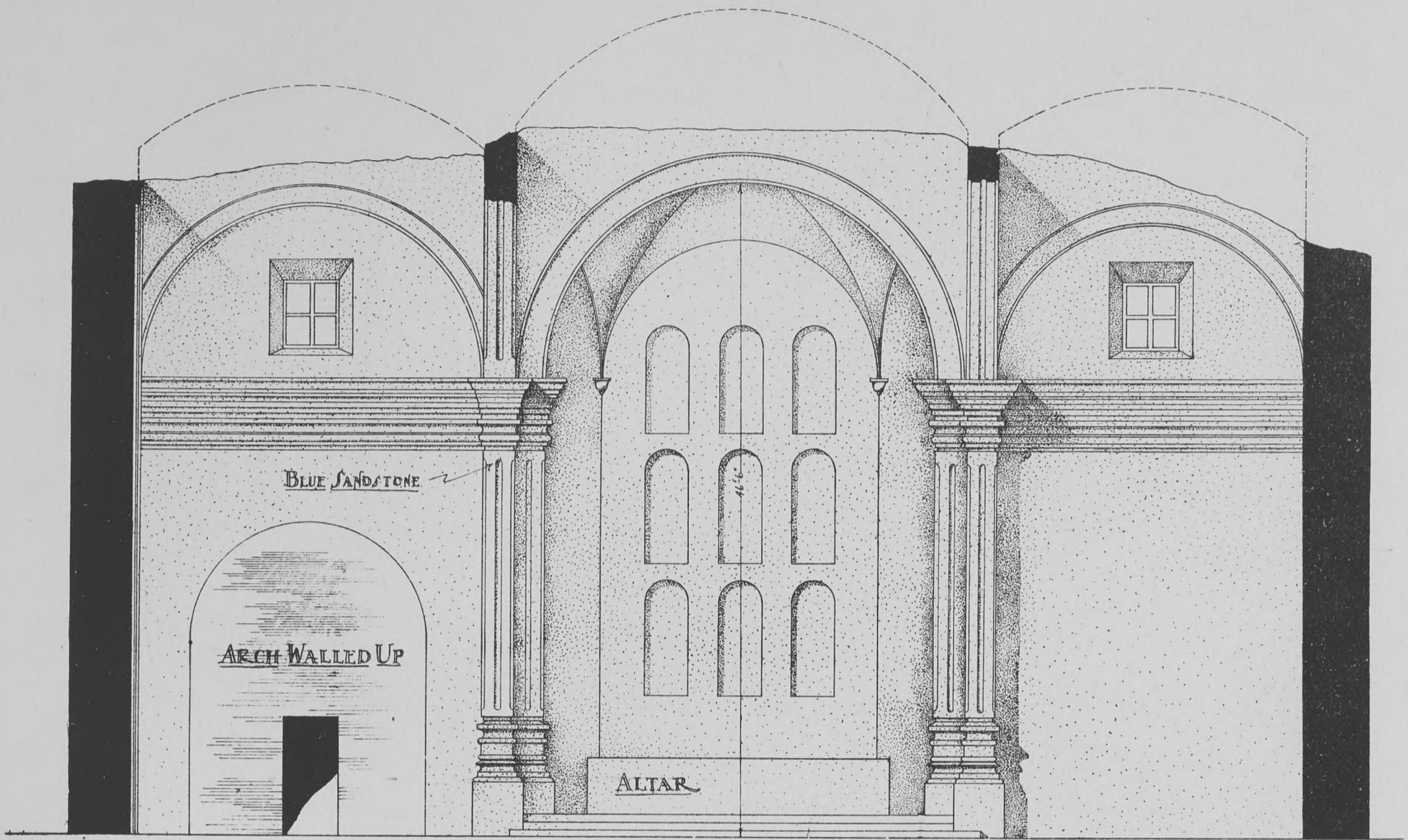
MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
RUINED SANCTUARY

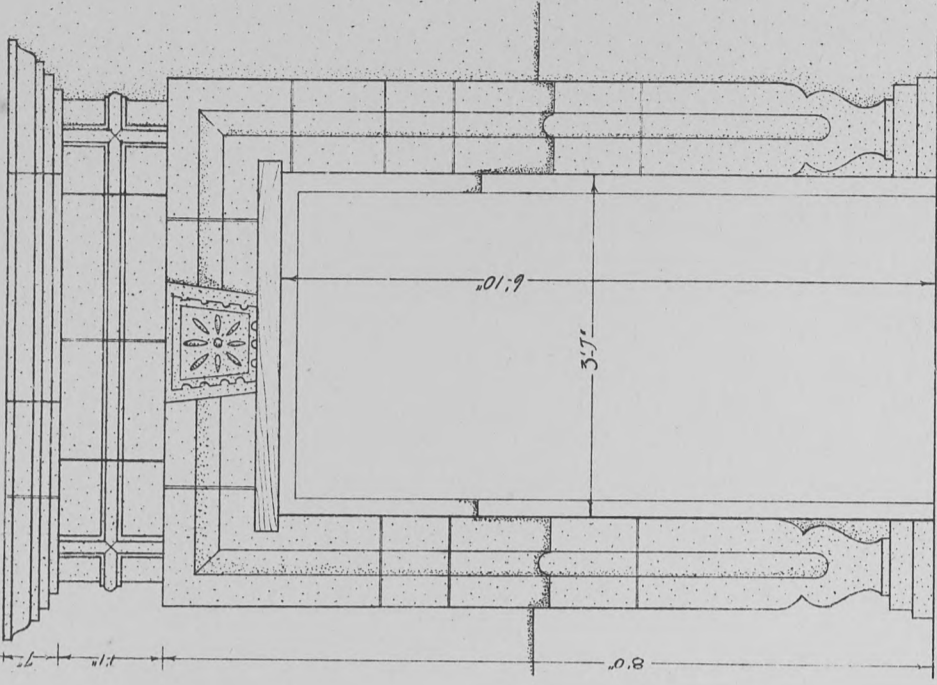




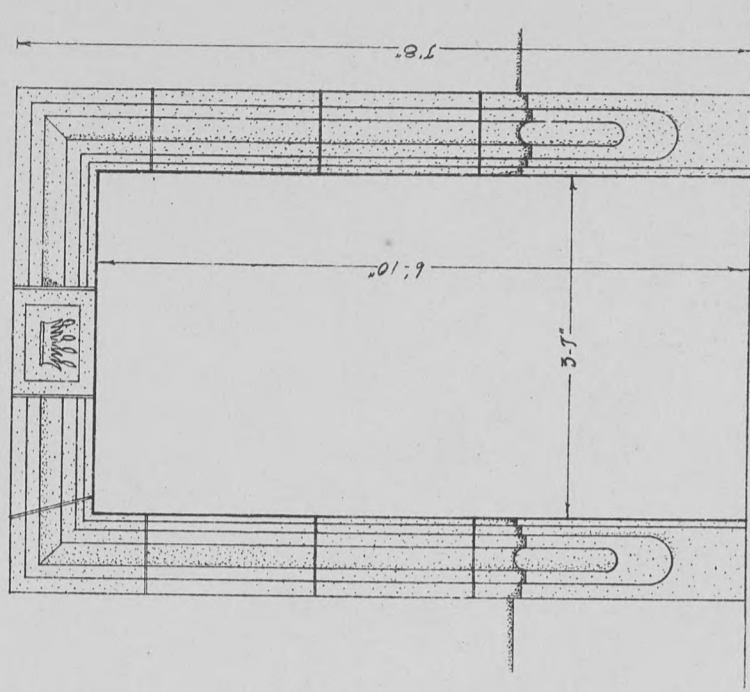
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO MISSION

THE
LIBRARY





• PRIESTS' HOUSE • CAPISTRANO •

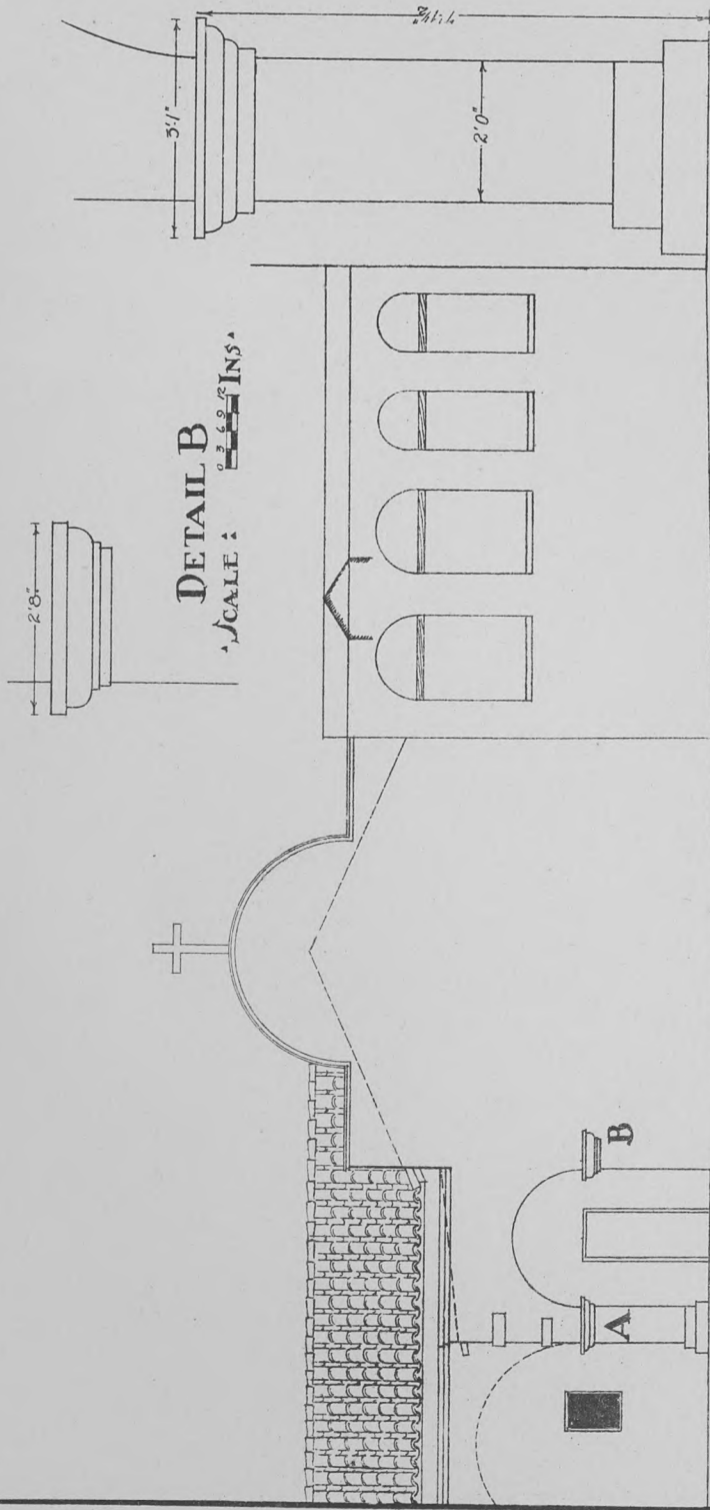


• SACRISTY • CAPISTRANO •

• MISSION • DOORWAYS •

MATERIAL • STONE

SCALE 1" = 3'-0" FT



DETAIL A

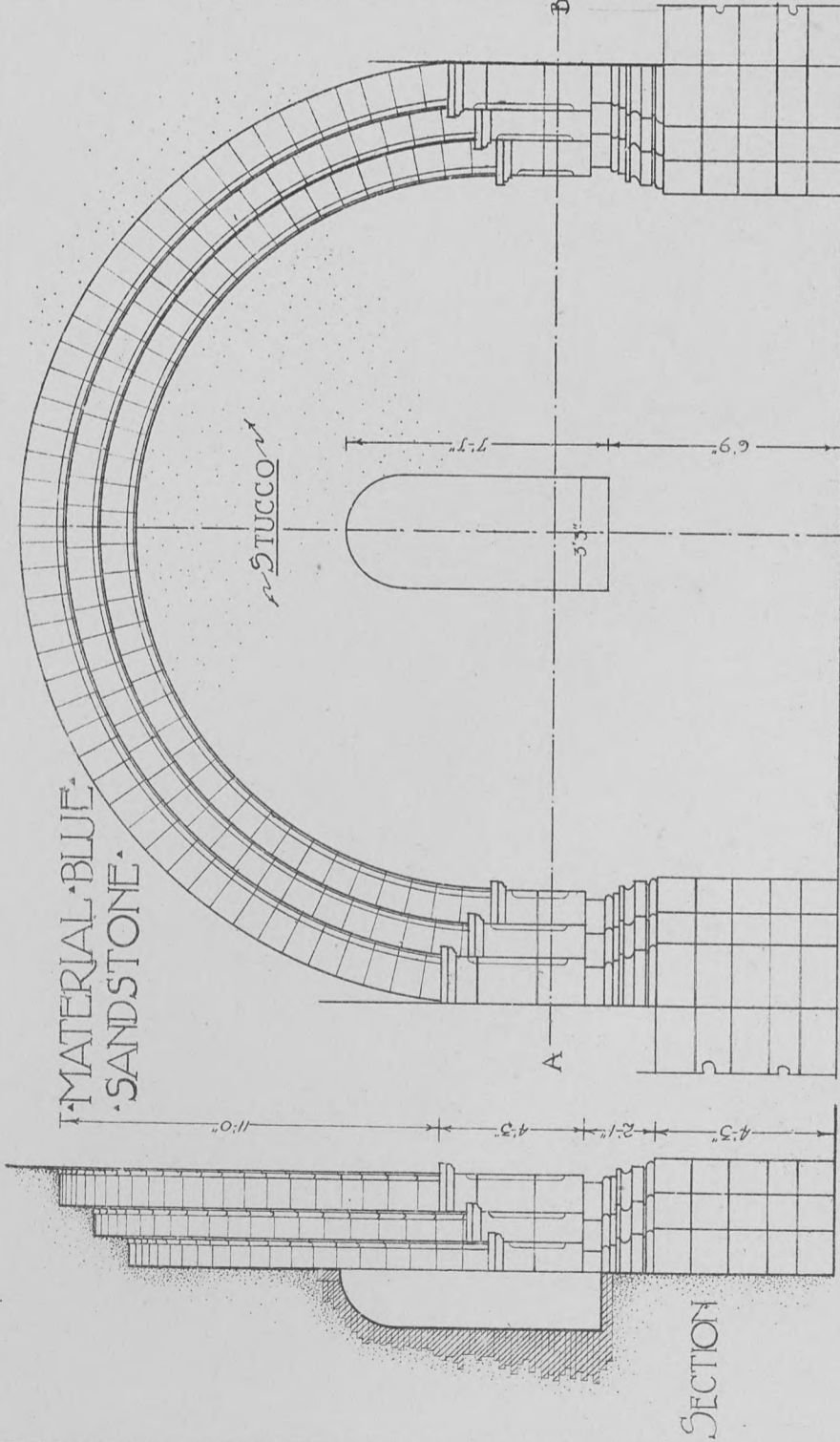
SCALE 1" = 3'-0" IN

• CHAPEL AND BELFRY •

• SAN JUAN • CAPISTRANO •

MATERIAL • BRICK •

SCALE 1" = 3'-0" FT



ELEVATION

NICHE IN NAVE
• CAPISTRANO •

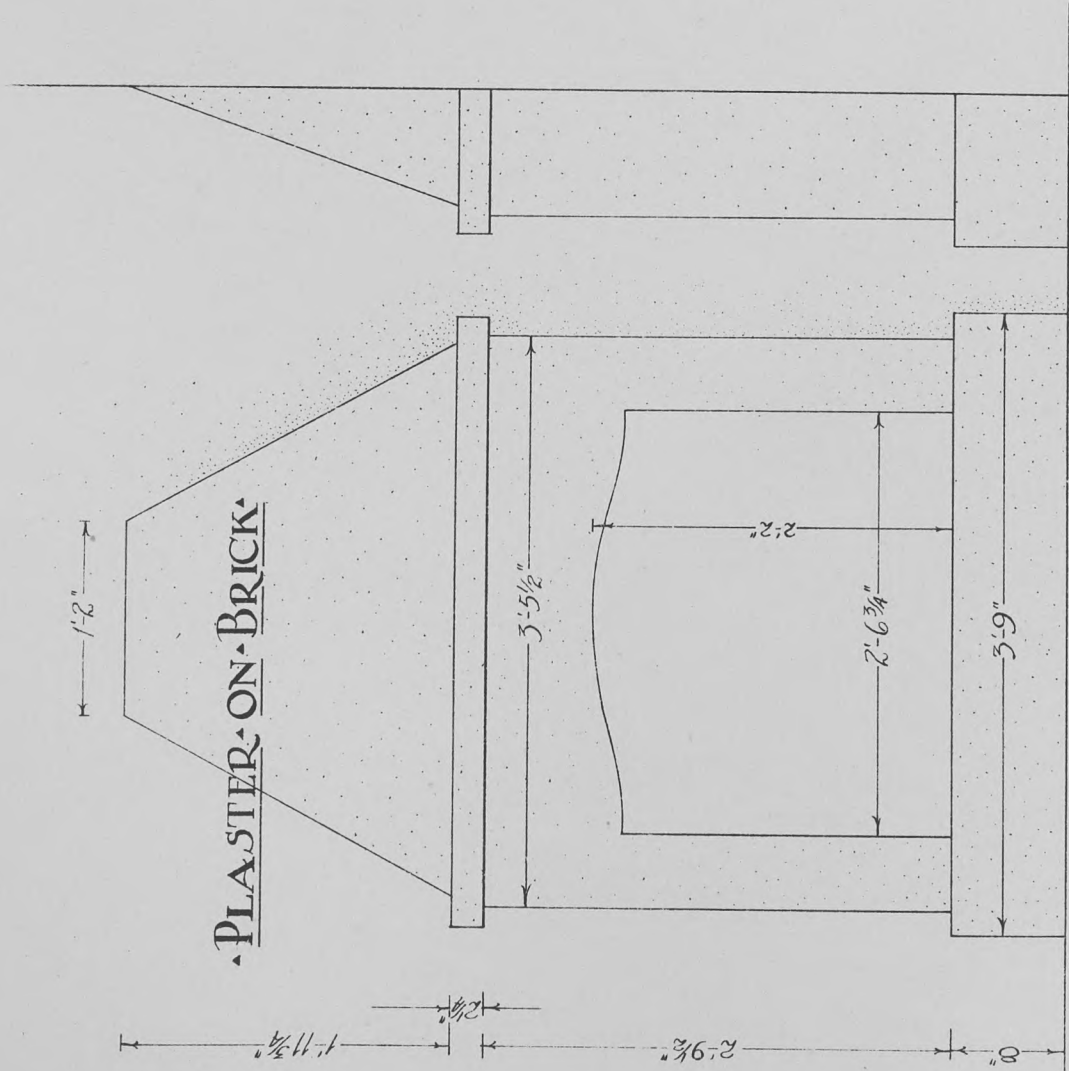
SCALE 1" = 2'-0" FT

PLAN • A • T • A • B •

Число 1000

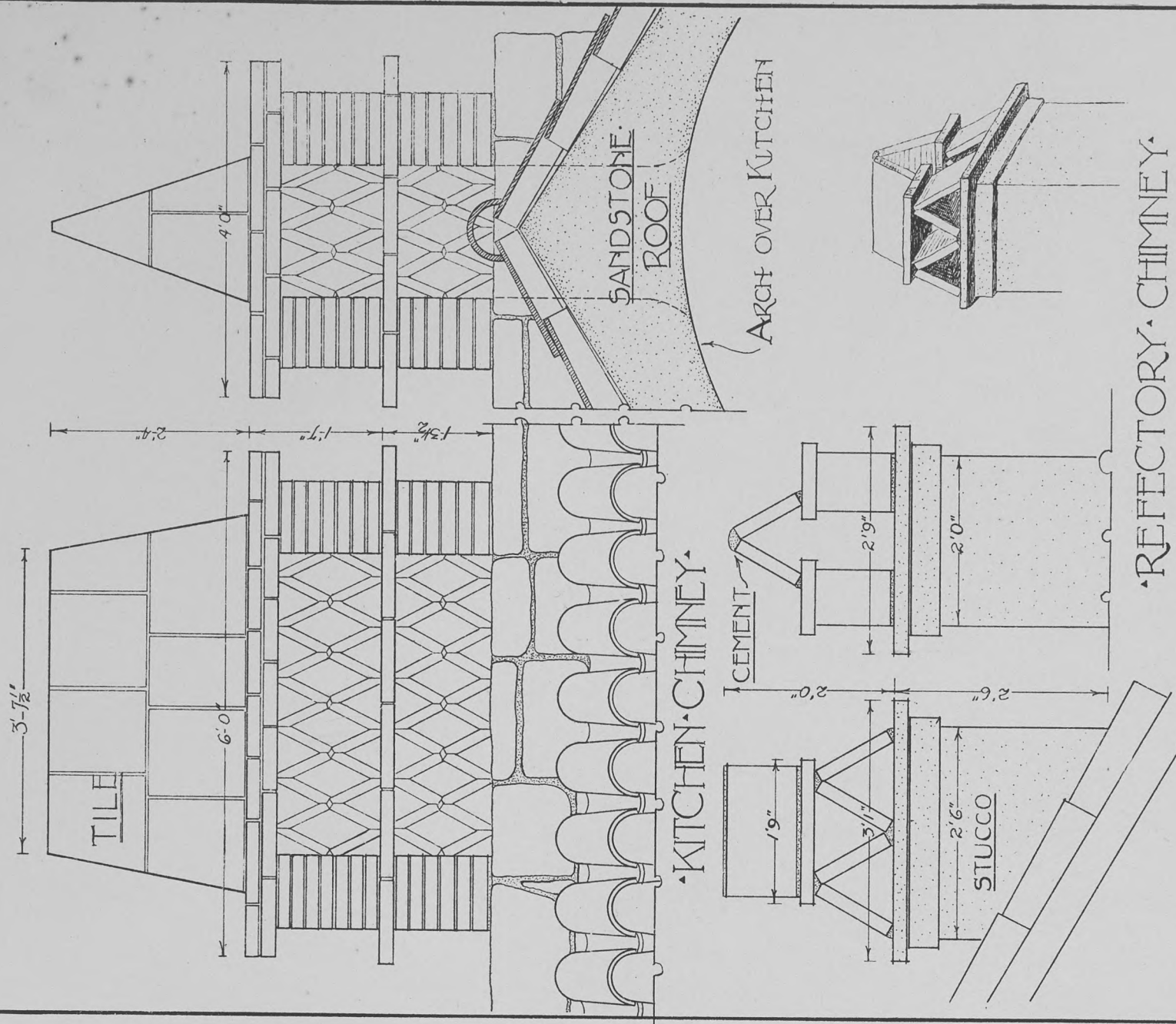
Число 1000

Число 1000



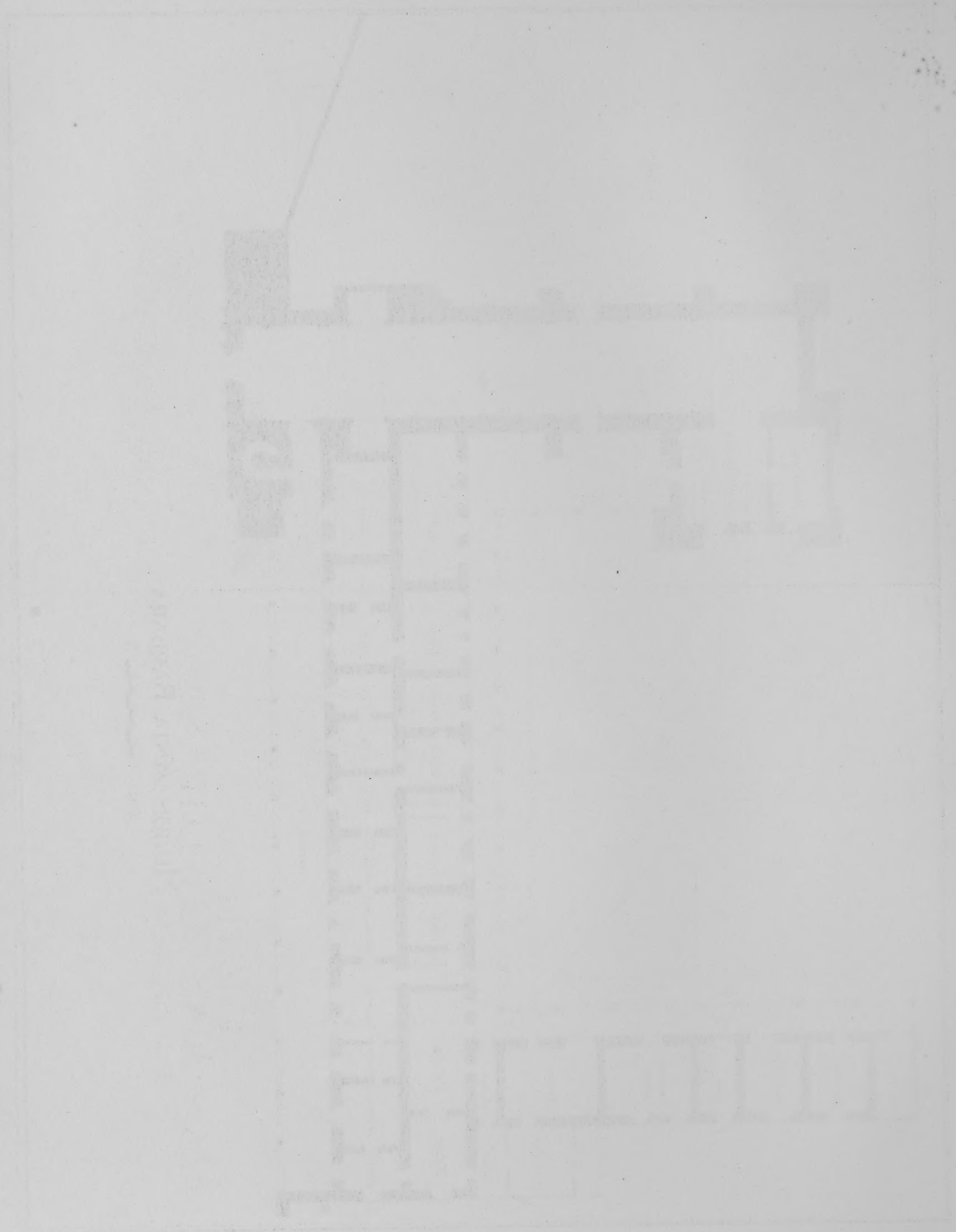
• FIREPLACE •
• SAN JUAN • CAPISTRANO •

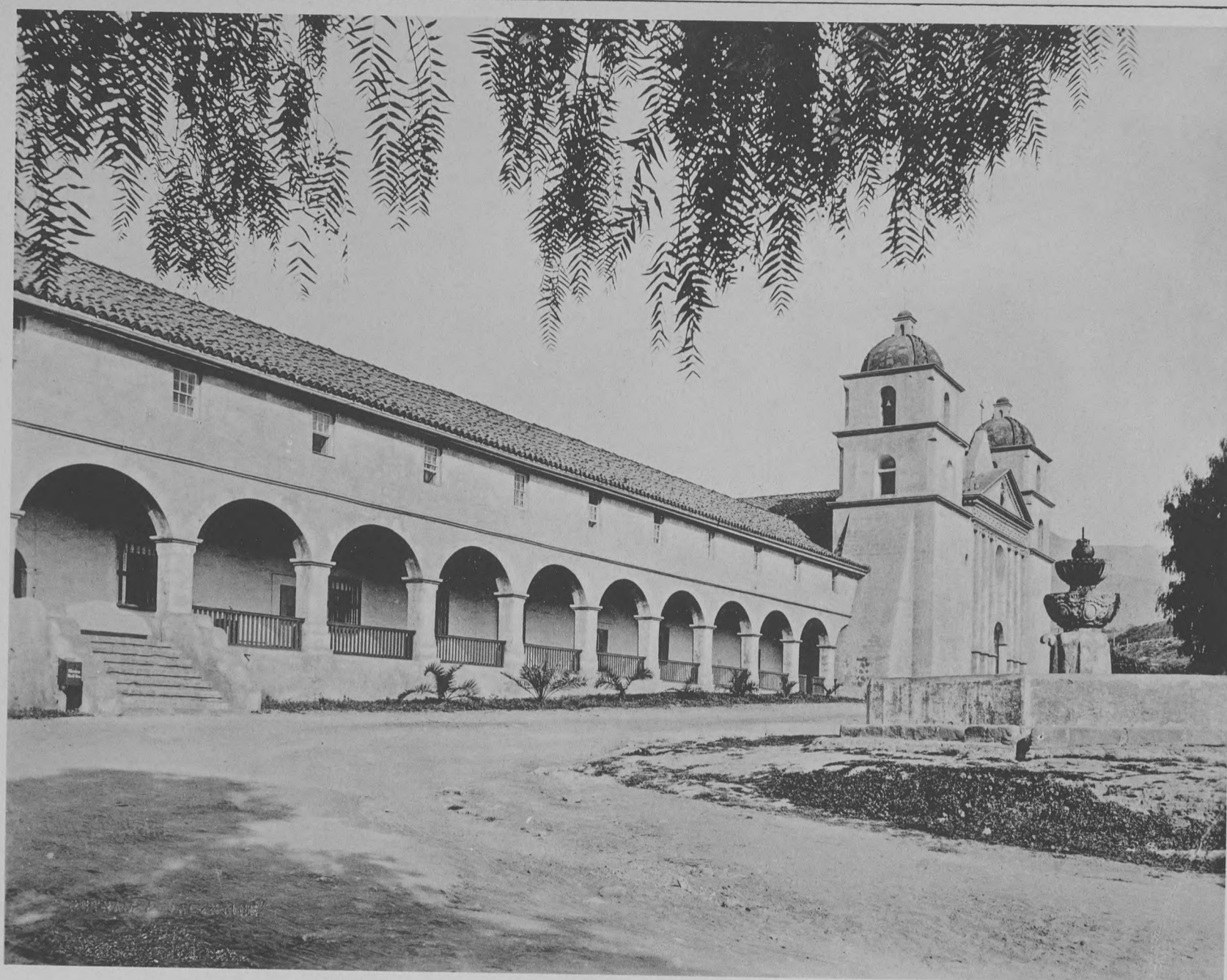
SCALE : $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1' 0"



• CHIMNEYS • SAN JUAN • CAPISTRANO •

• MATERIAL : RED TILES •





SANTA BARBARA MISSION - FACADE



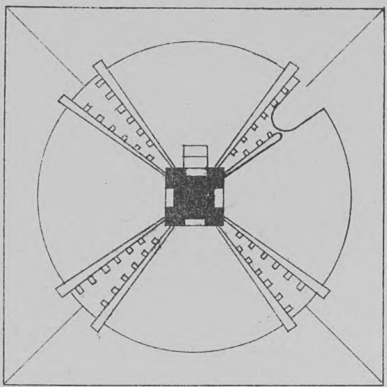
SANTA BARBARA MISSION - CORRIDOR



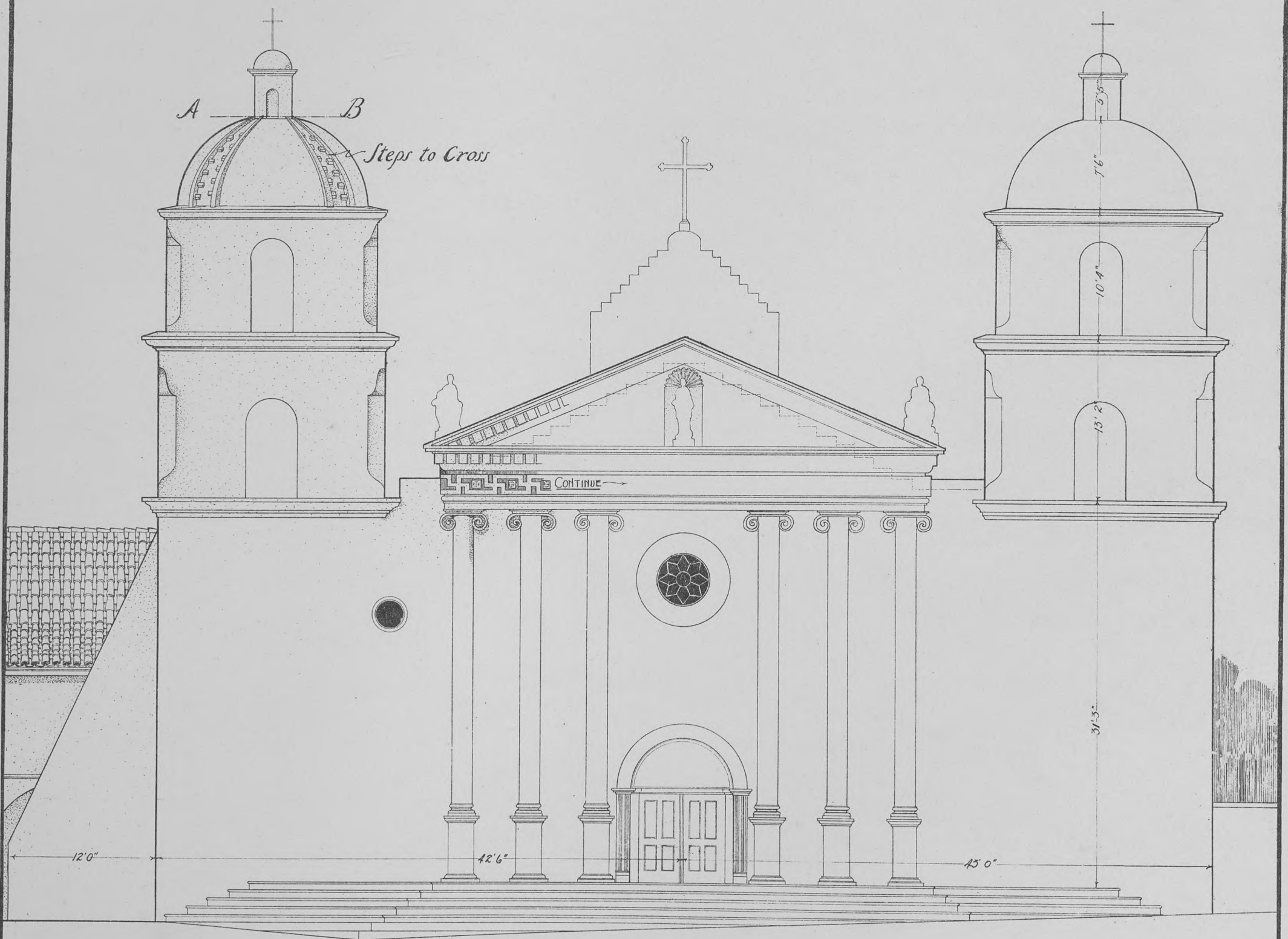
SANTA BARBARA - MONKS GARDEN



SANTA BARBARA - FACADE AND FOUNTAIN



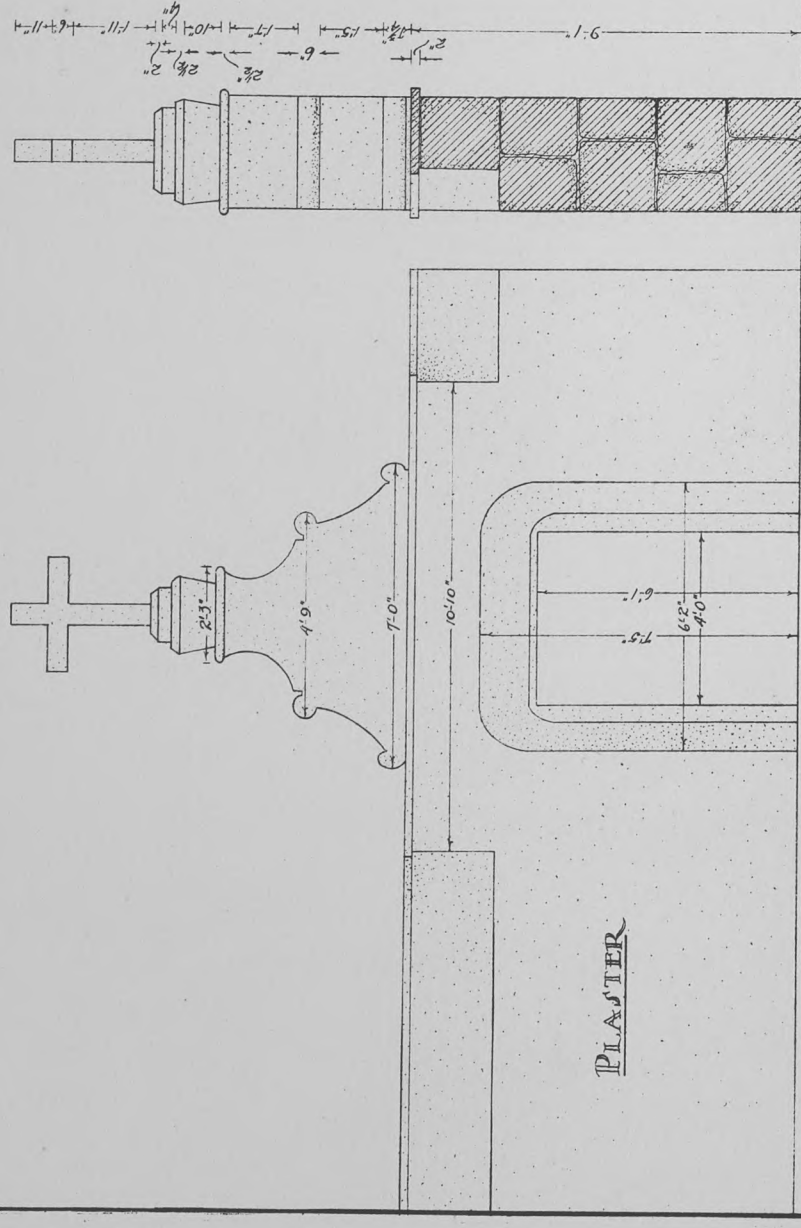
Plan at A B



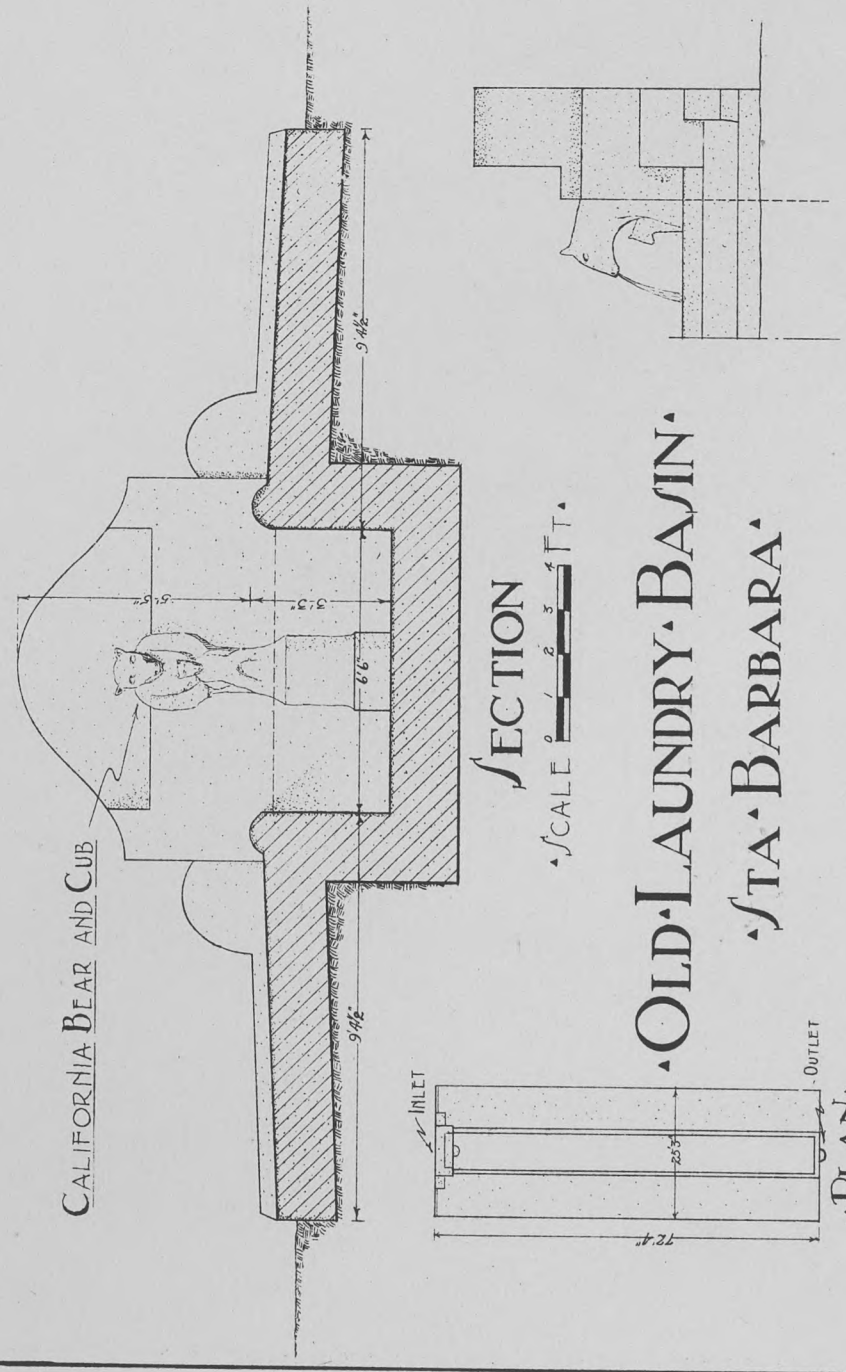
MISSION · SANTA · BARBARA ·

Scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 Ft



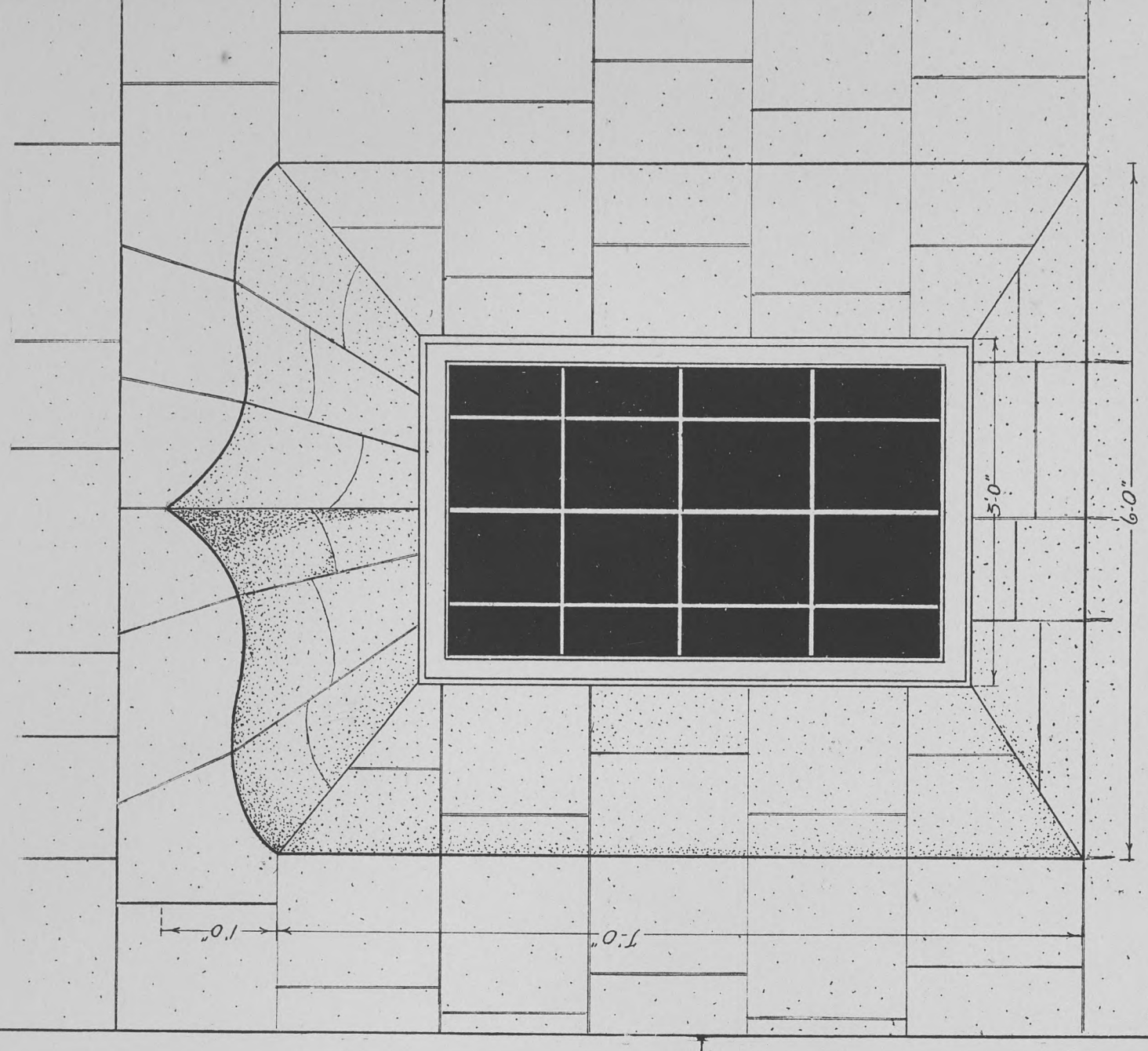


CEMETERY GATEWAY STA BARBARA
MATERIAL STONE
SCALE 1/2" = 1 FT

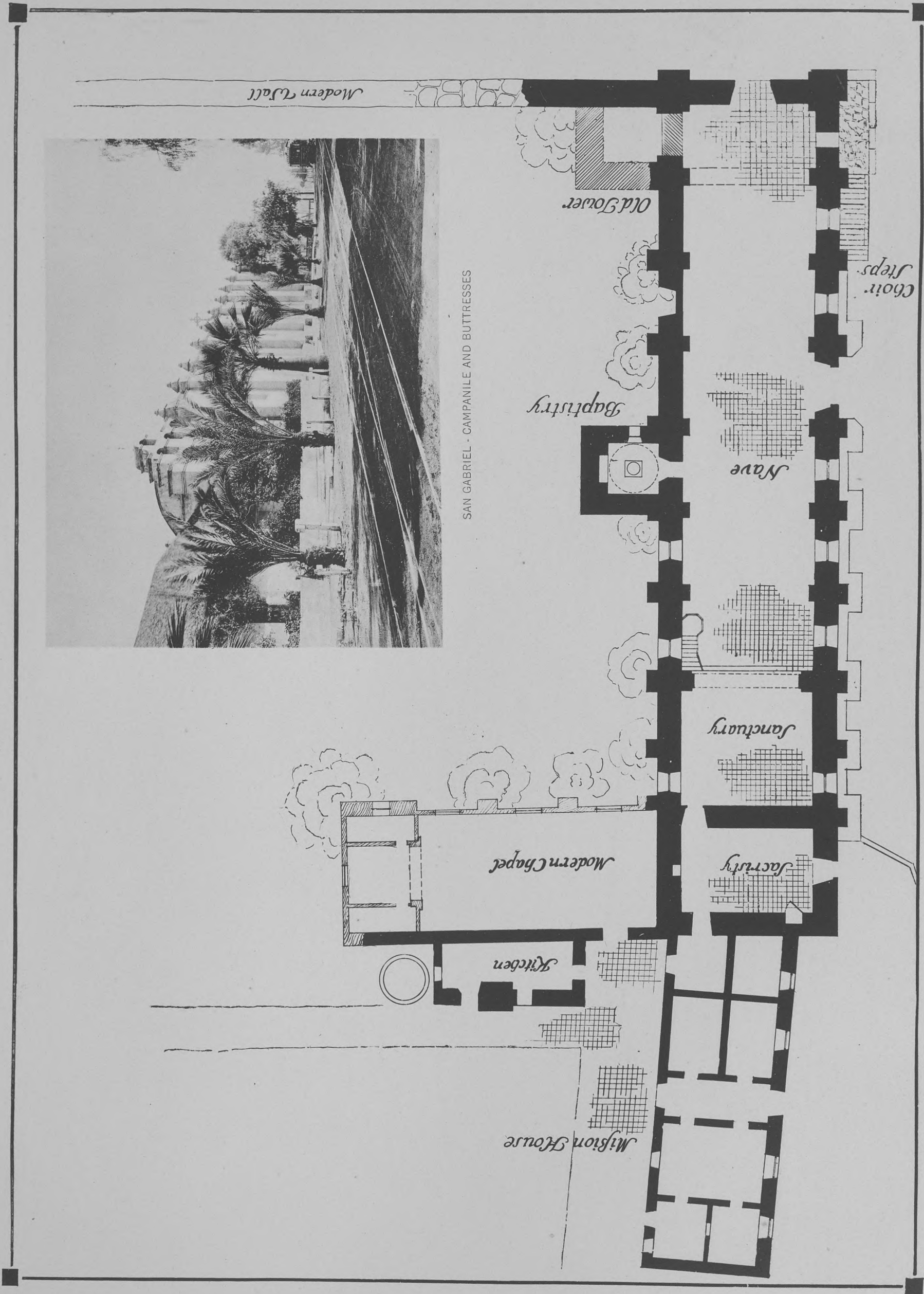


OLD LAUNDRY BASIN
STA BARBARA
SCALE 1/2" = 1 FT

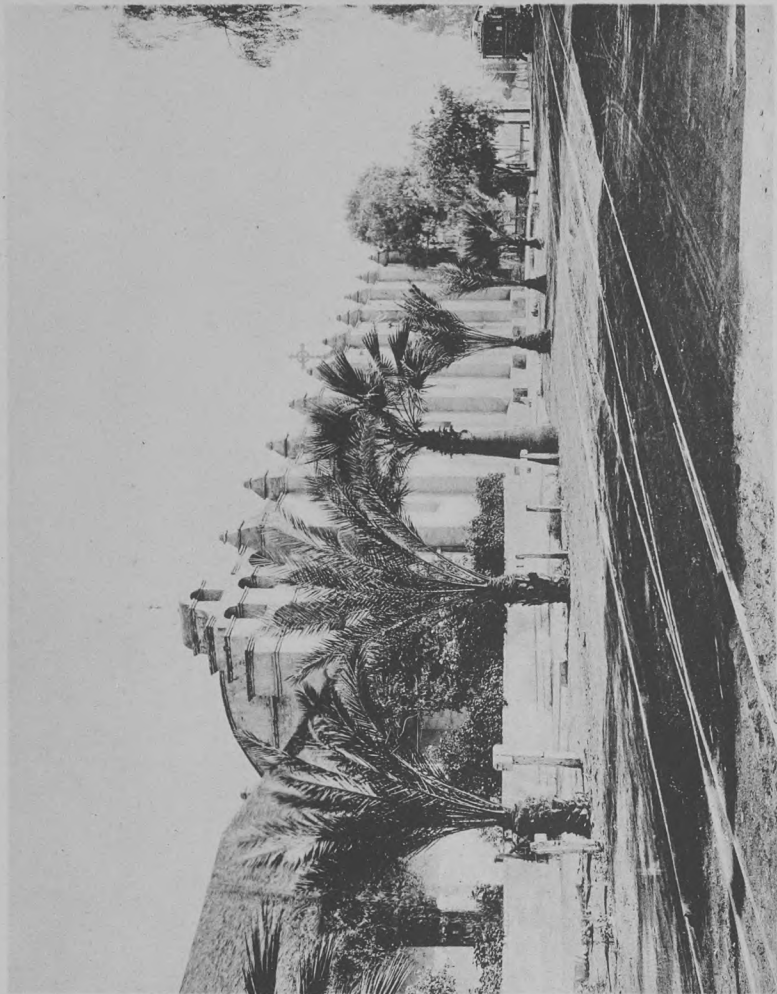
PLAN
SCALE 1/2" = 1 FT



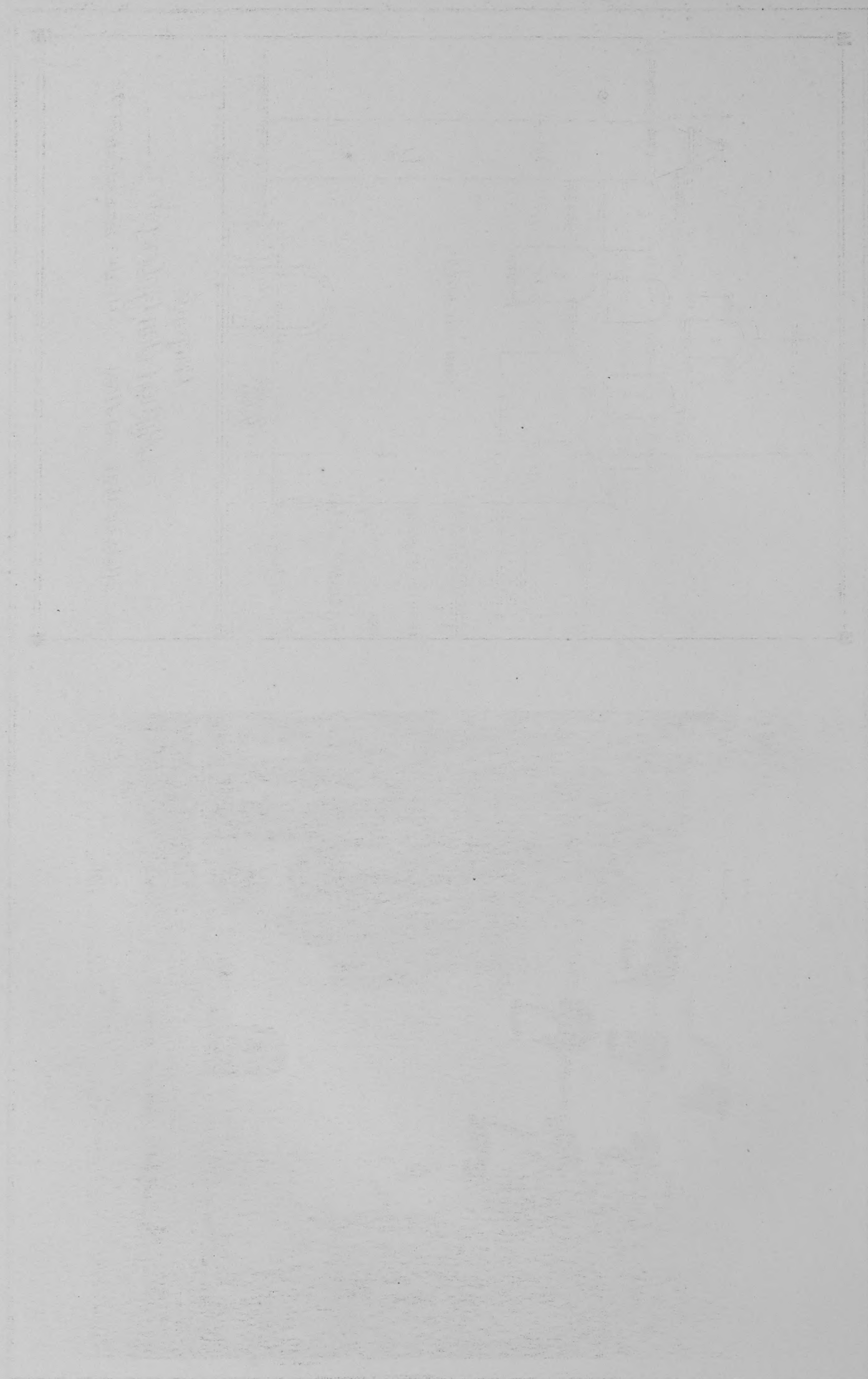
WINDOW STA BARBARA
MATERIAL STONE
SCALE 1/2" = 1 FT

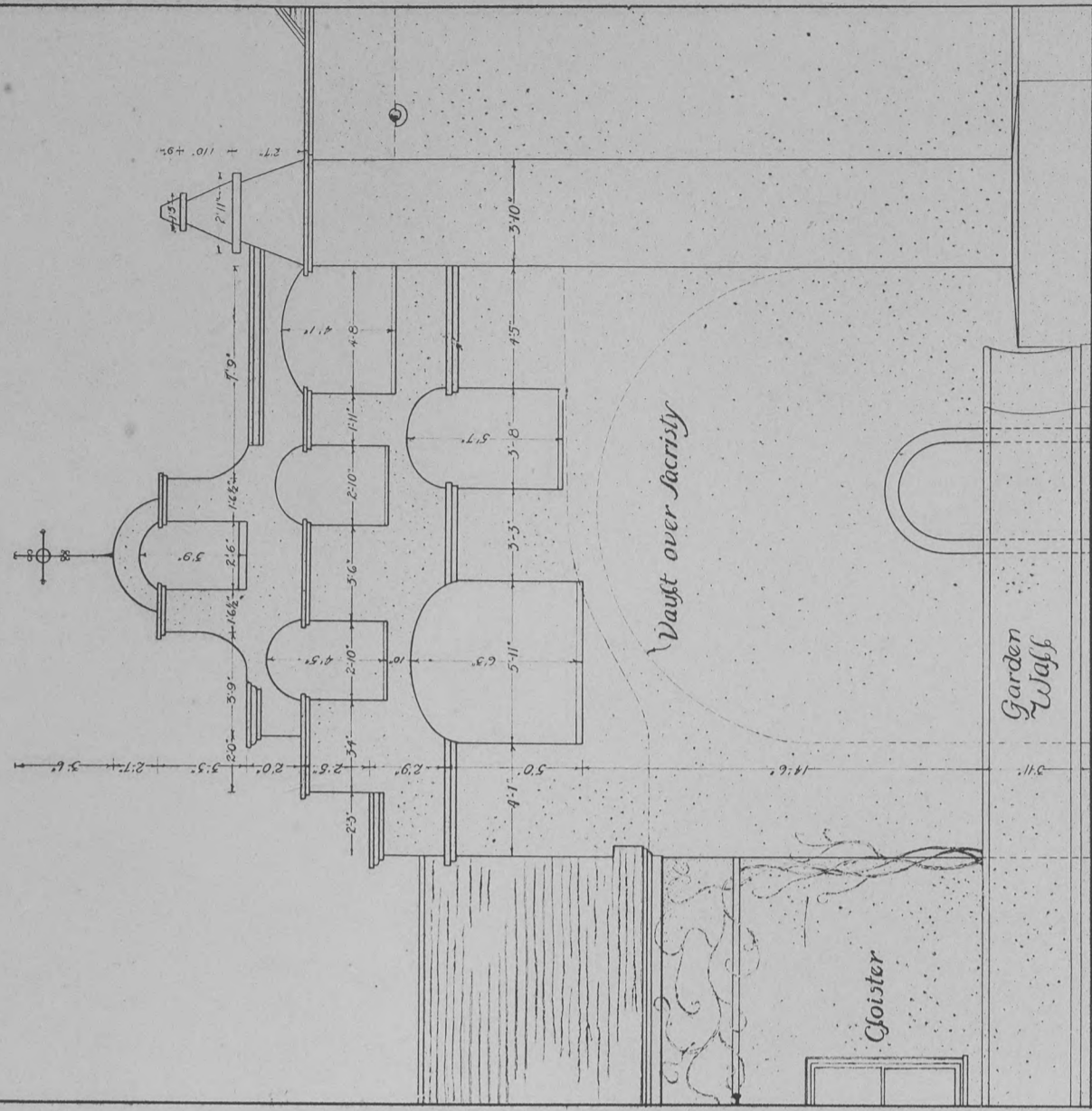
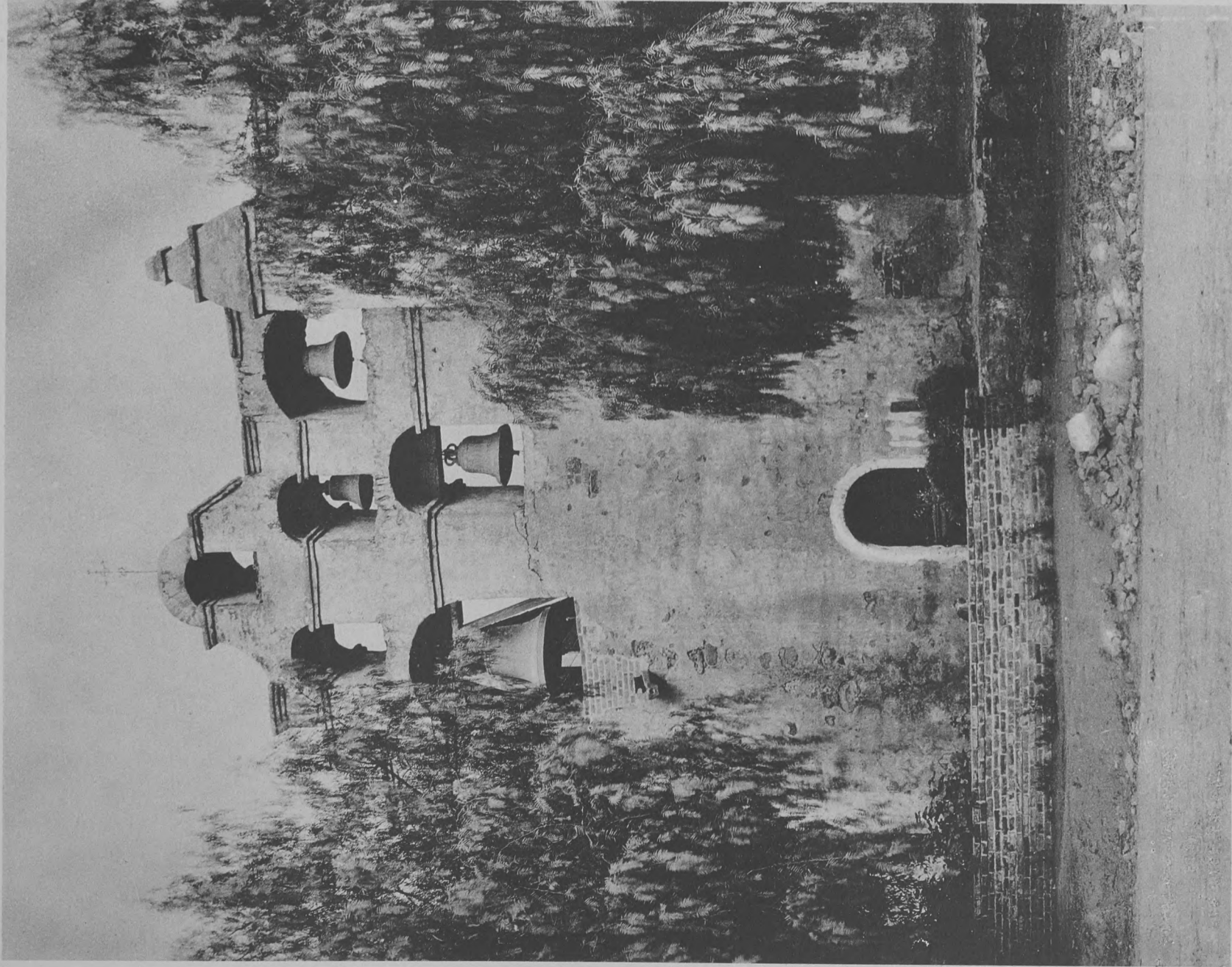


SAN GABRIEL - CAMPANILE AND BUTTRESSES

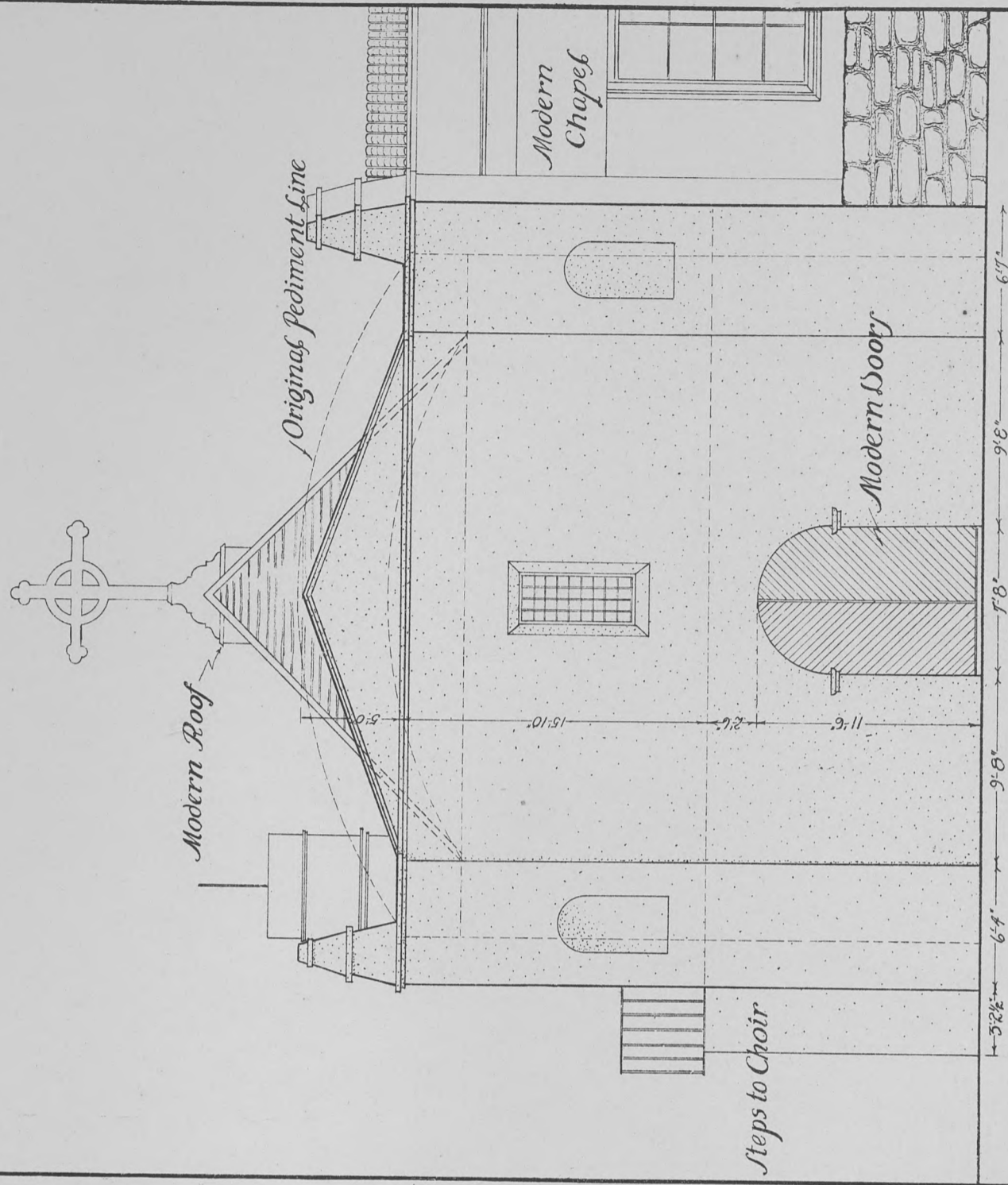
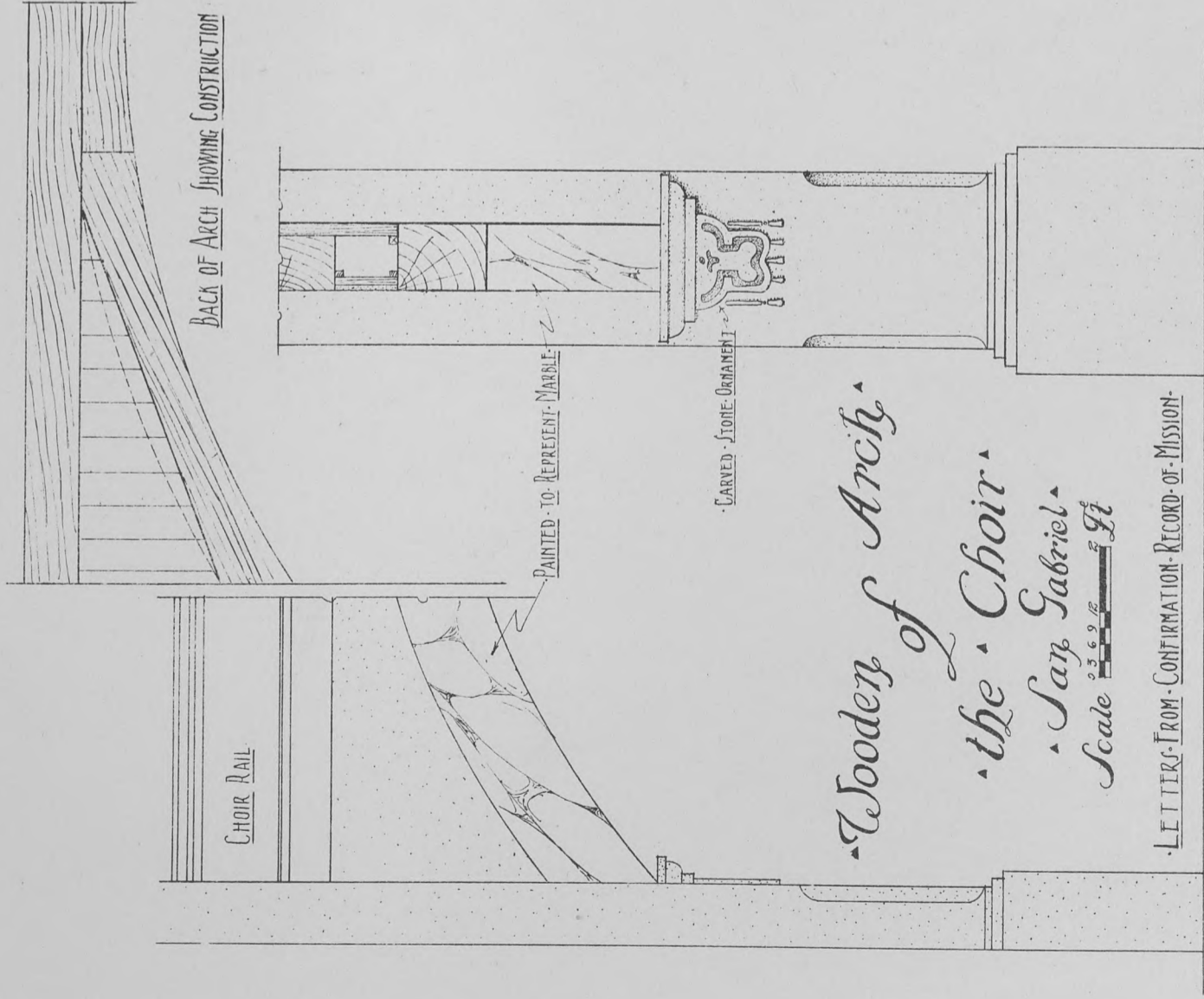


Mission San Gabriel :
Materials: Brick, Stone Gile : Scale : Ground Plan





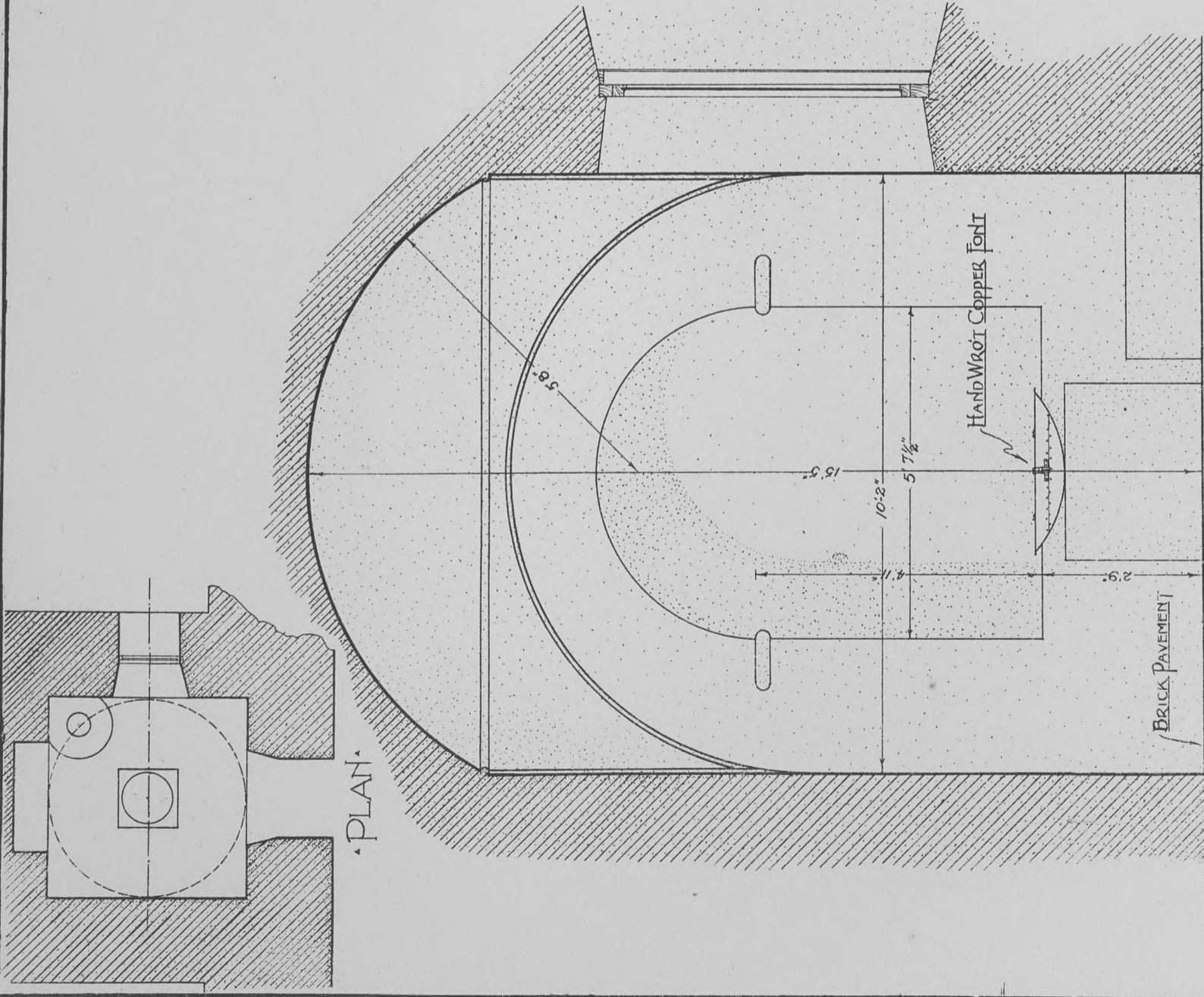
Campanile
Mission San Gabriel
Material: Brick and Stone *Scale: 1" = 6' 6"*



*'Eastern Fachada'
'Mission San Gabriel'
Materials: Brick and Stone' Scale 1/8" = 1' It*

THE CHURCH
DOCUMENTS

THE CHURCH
DOCUMENTS

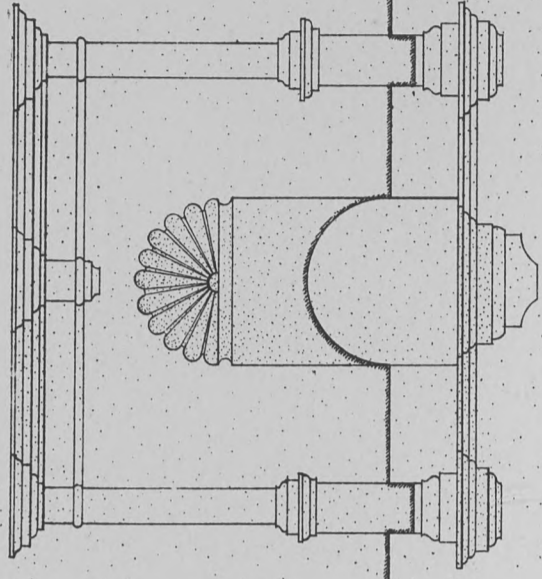


PLAN

BAPTISTRY
SAN GABRIEL

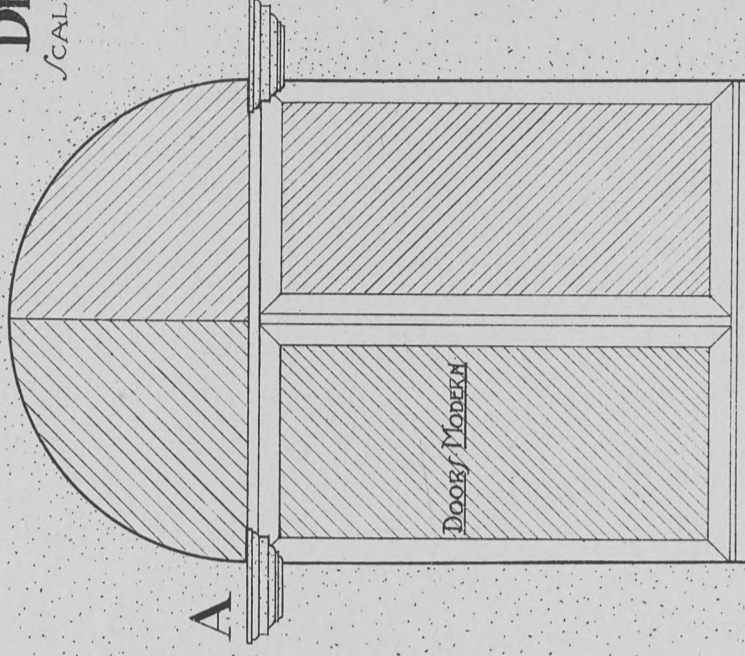
SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0"

MATERIAL: BRICK
AND STONE



STUCCO ON BRICK

DETAIL A
SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0"

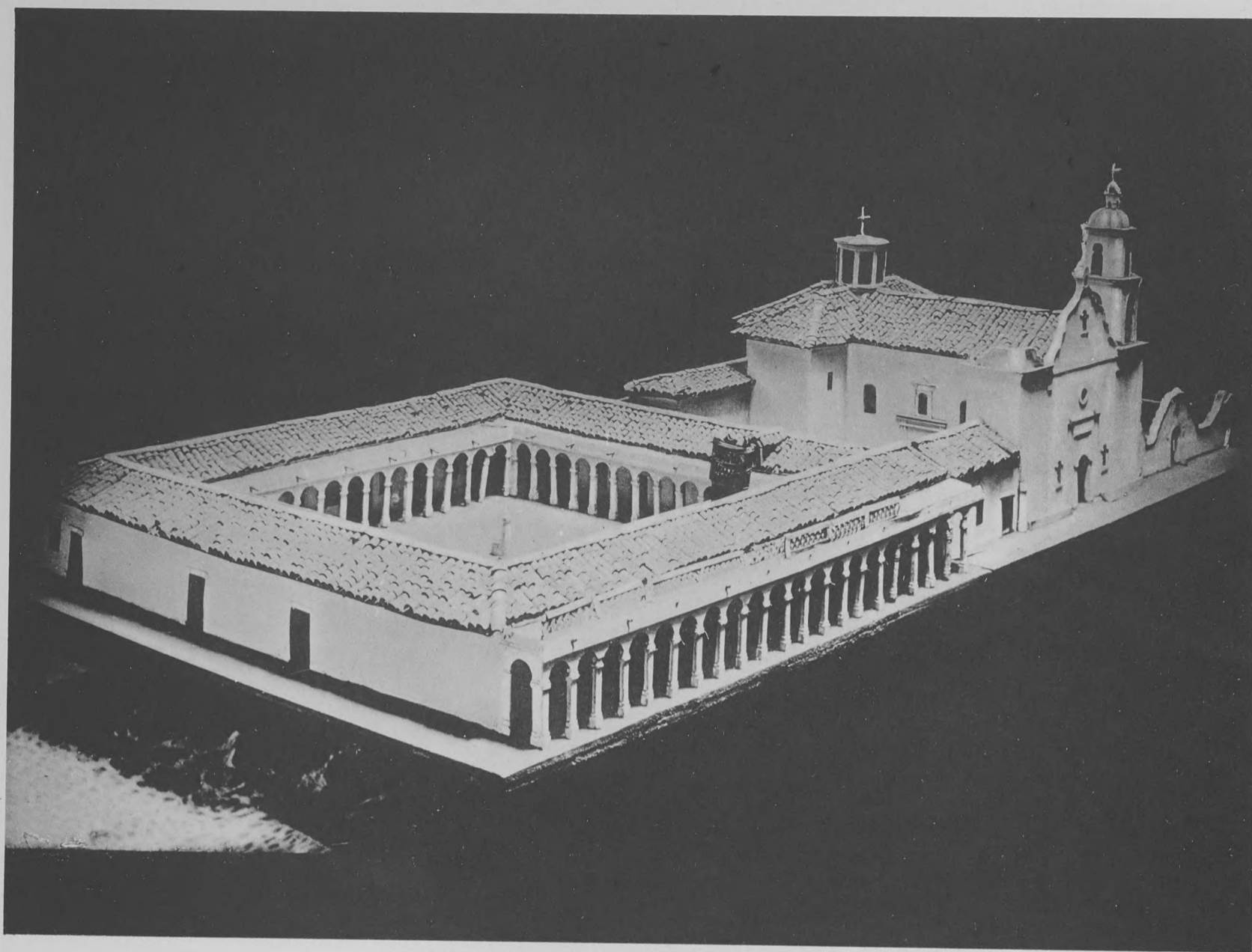


A

DOORWAY OF CHURCH
SAN GABRIEL

SCALE 1/2" = 1'-0"

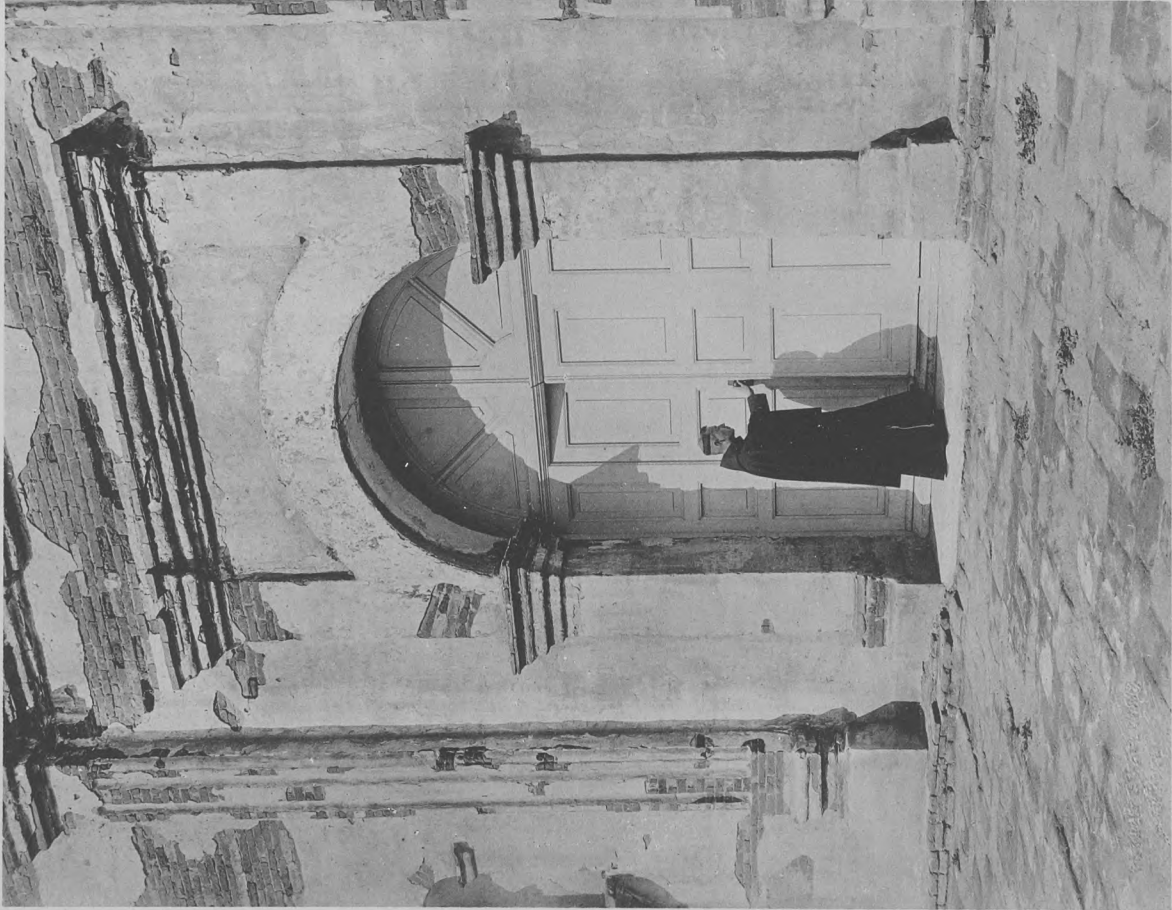




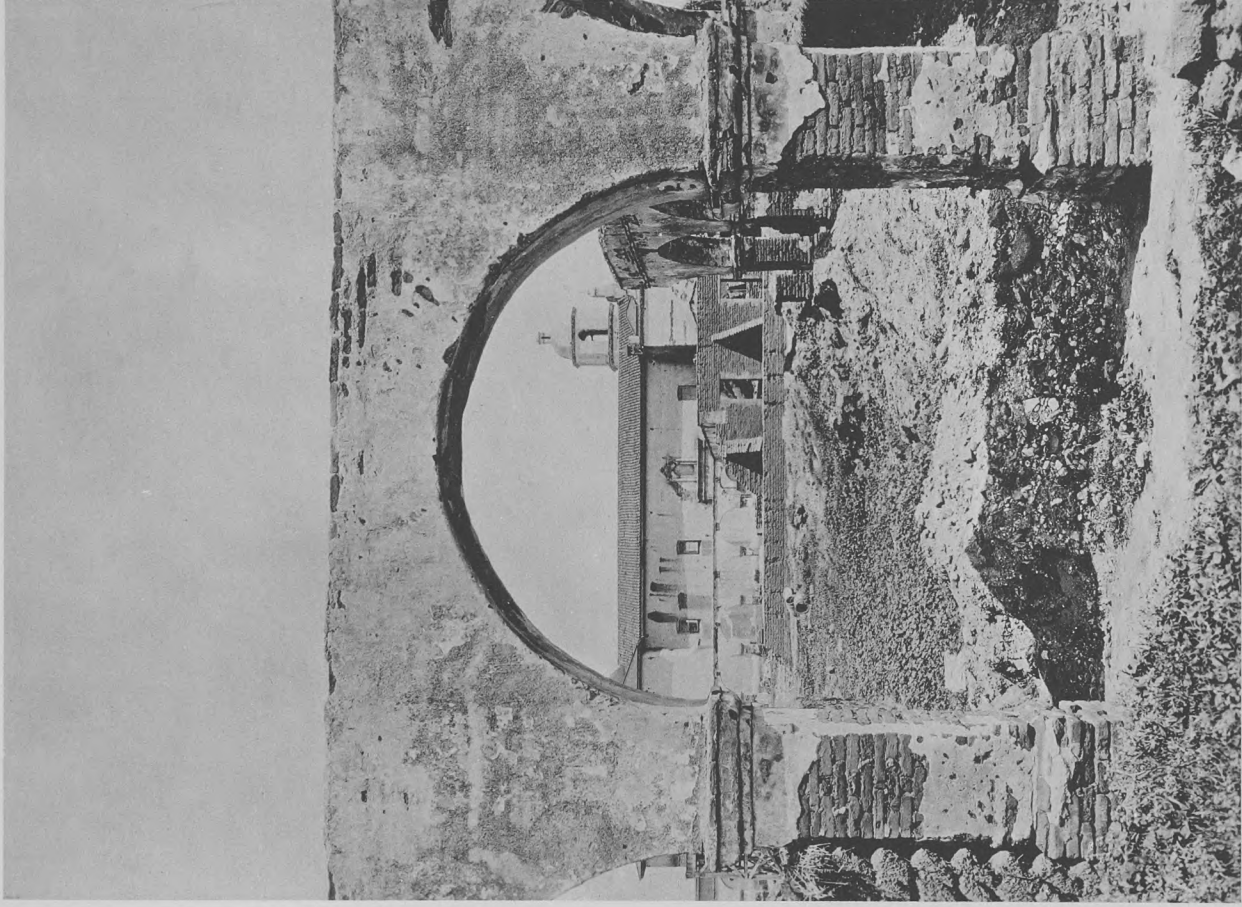
PERSPECTIVE OF MODEL OF SAN LUIS REY
MODEL MADE BY DON ANTONIO CORONEL



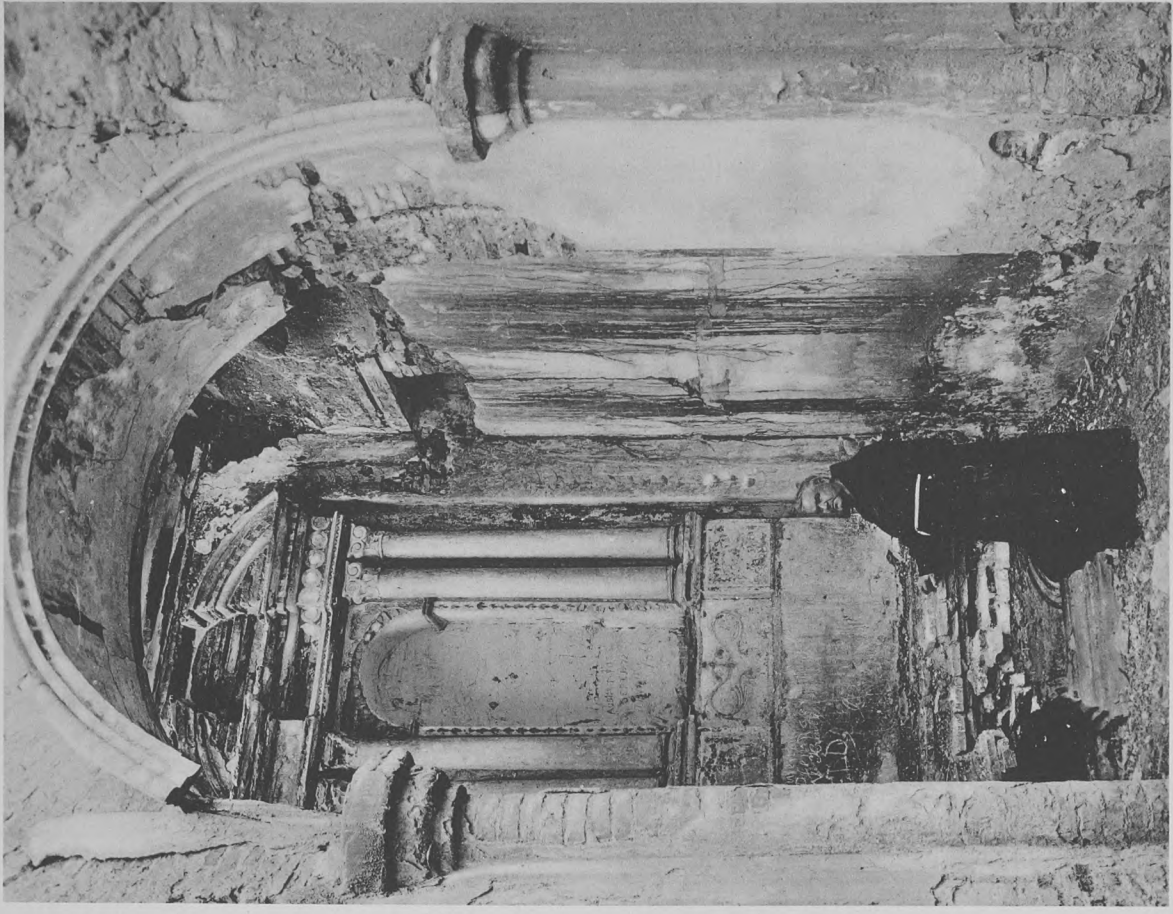
SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA - FACADE AND CEMETERY



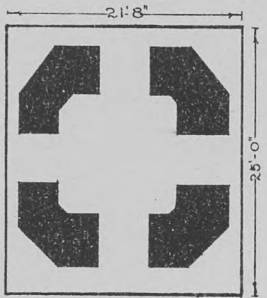
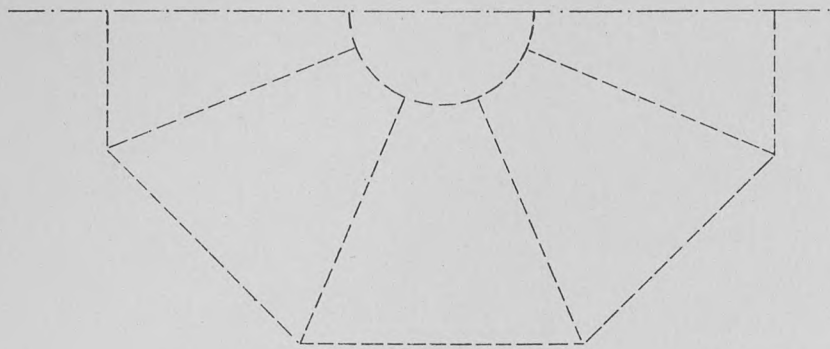
SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA
MAIN PORTAL OF CHURCH



MISSION - SAN LUIS REY
PATIO BEFORE RESTORATION



SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA
MORTUARY CHAPEL



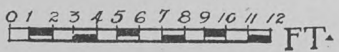
PLAN AT AB

MODERN METAL ROOF

STUCCO

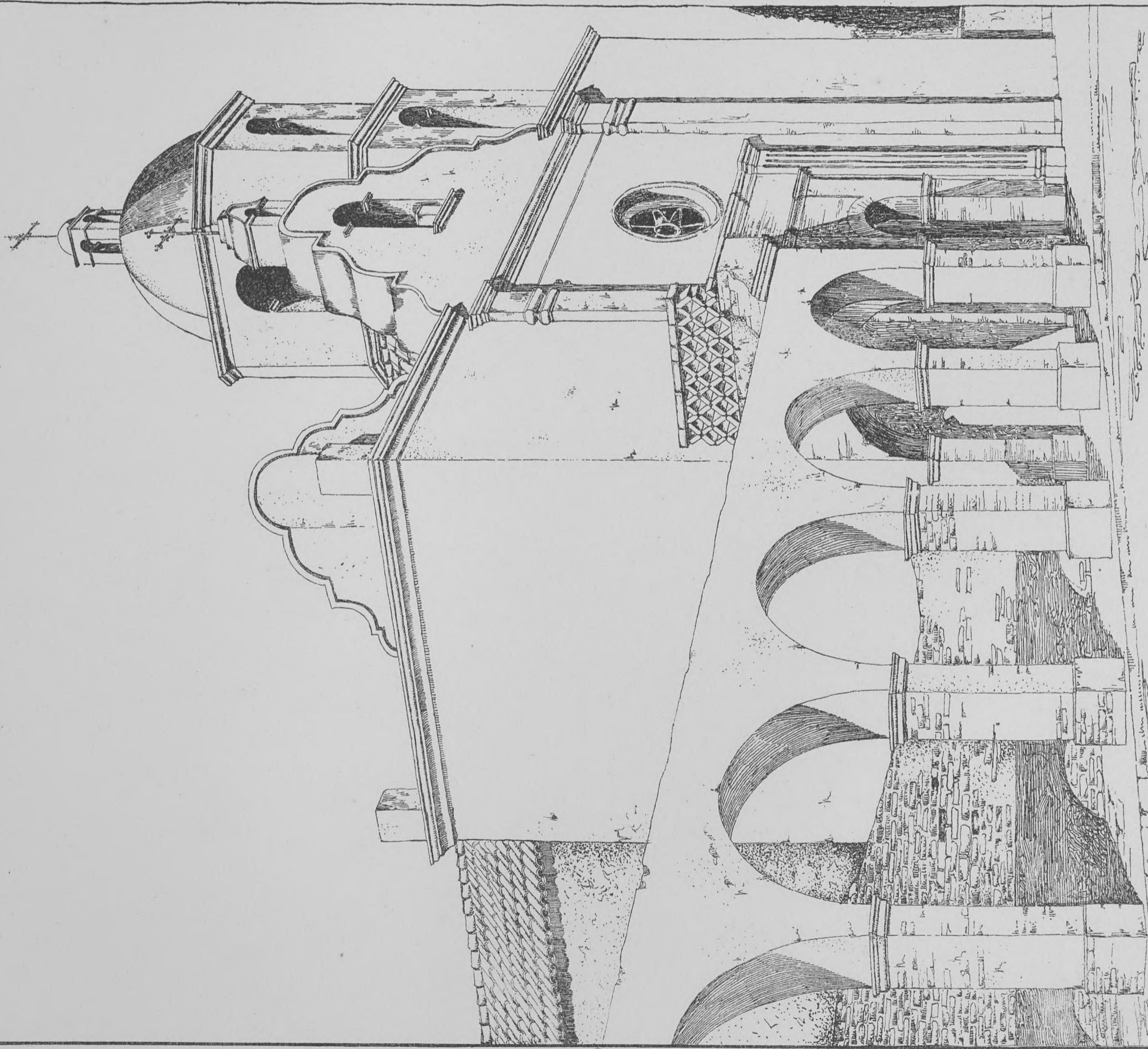


SCALE



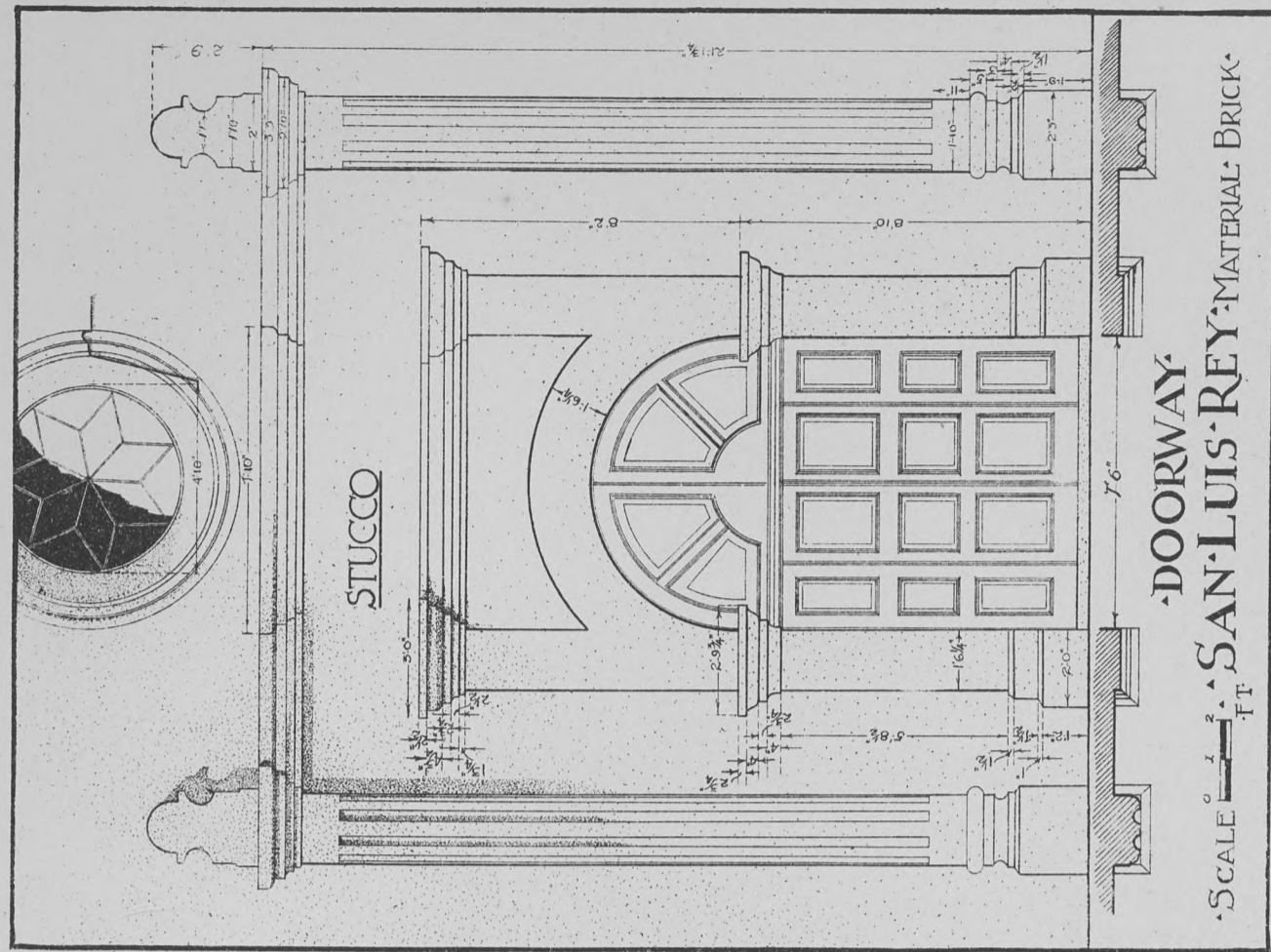
FACADE OF CHURCH
MISSION SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA

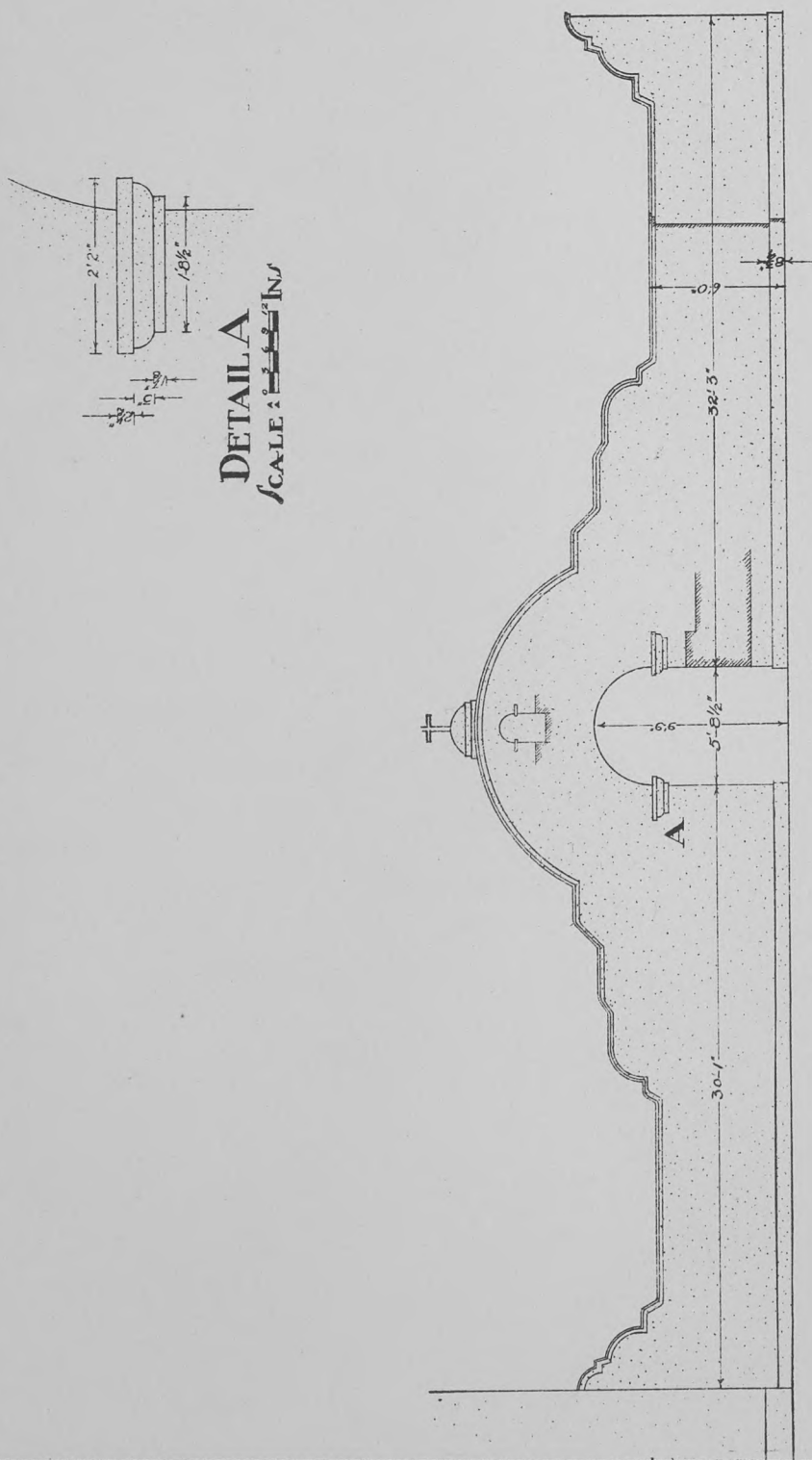
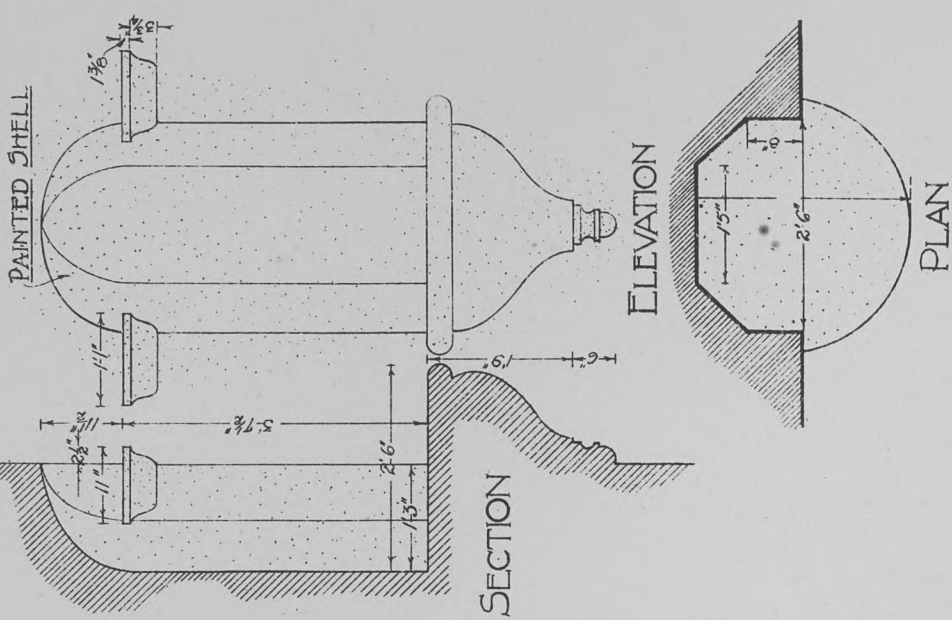
MATERIAL
BRICK



SAN LUIS REY
BEFORE RECENT RESTORATION

R.N. 1916

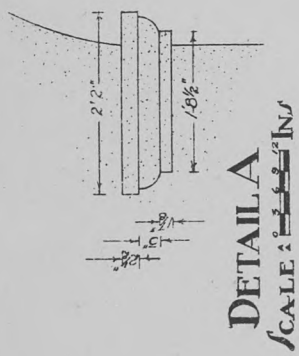




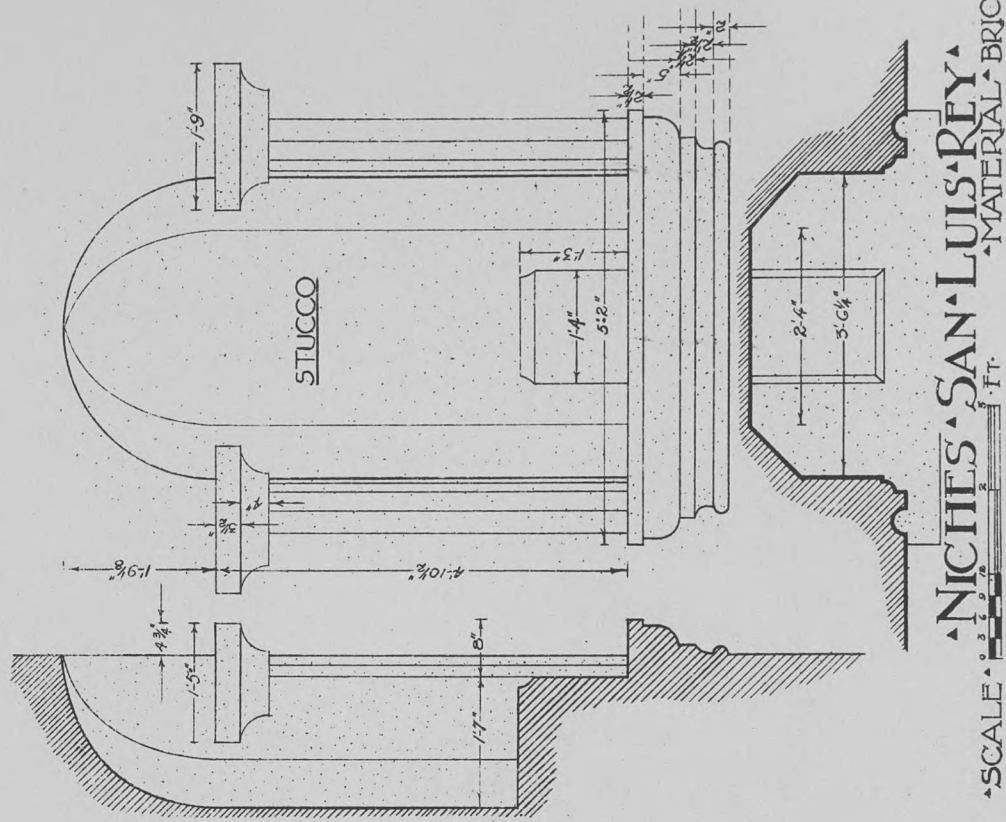
· CEMETERY · GATEWAY ·
· MISSION · SAN · LUIS · REY ·

· MATERIAL : BRICK · STUCCOED ·

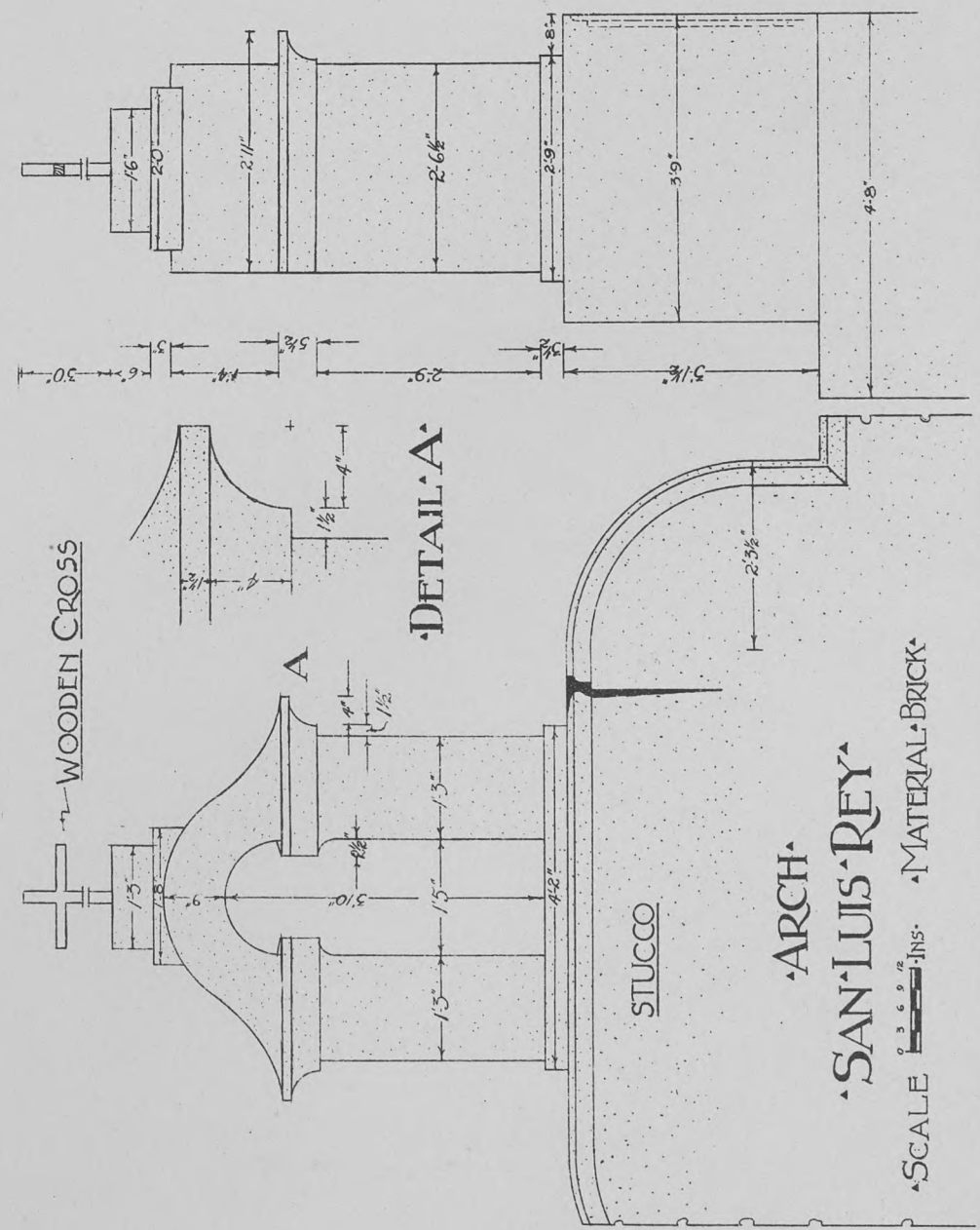
· SCALE : 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FT ·



DETAIL A
SCALE : 1/4" = 1'-0"



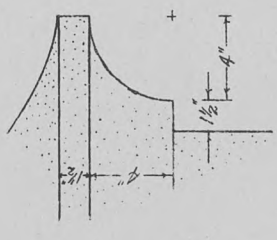
· SCALE : 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 FT ·
· NICHE · SAN · LUIS · REY ·
· MATERIAL · BRICK ·



· ARCH ·
· SAN · LUIS · REY ·

· SCALE : 1/4" = 1'-0" · MATERIAL · BRICK ·

· DETAIL A ·







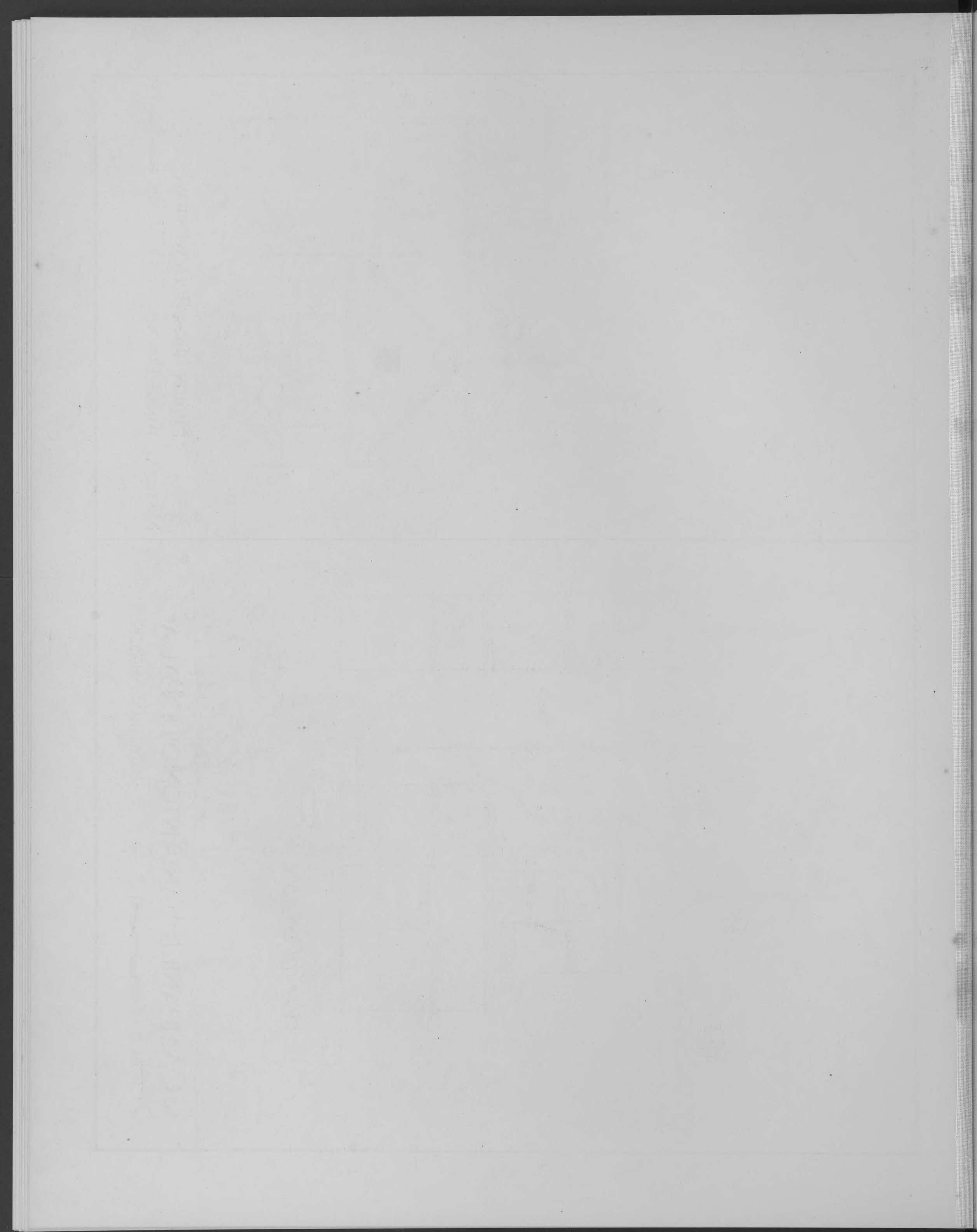
SAN BUENA VENTURA

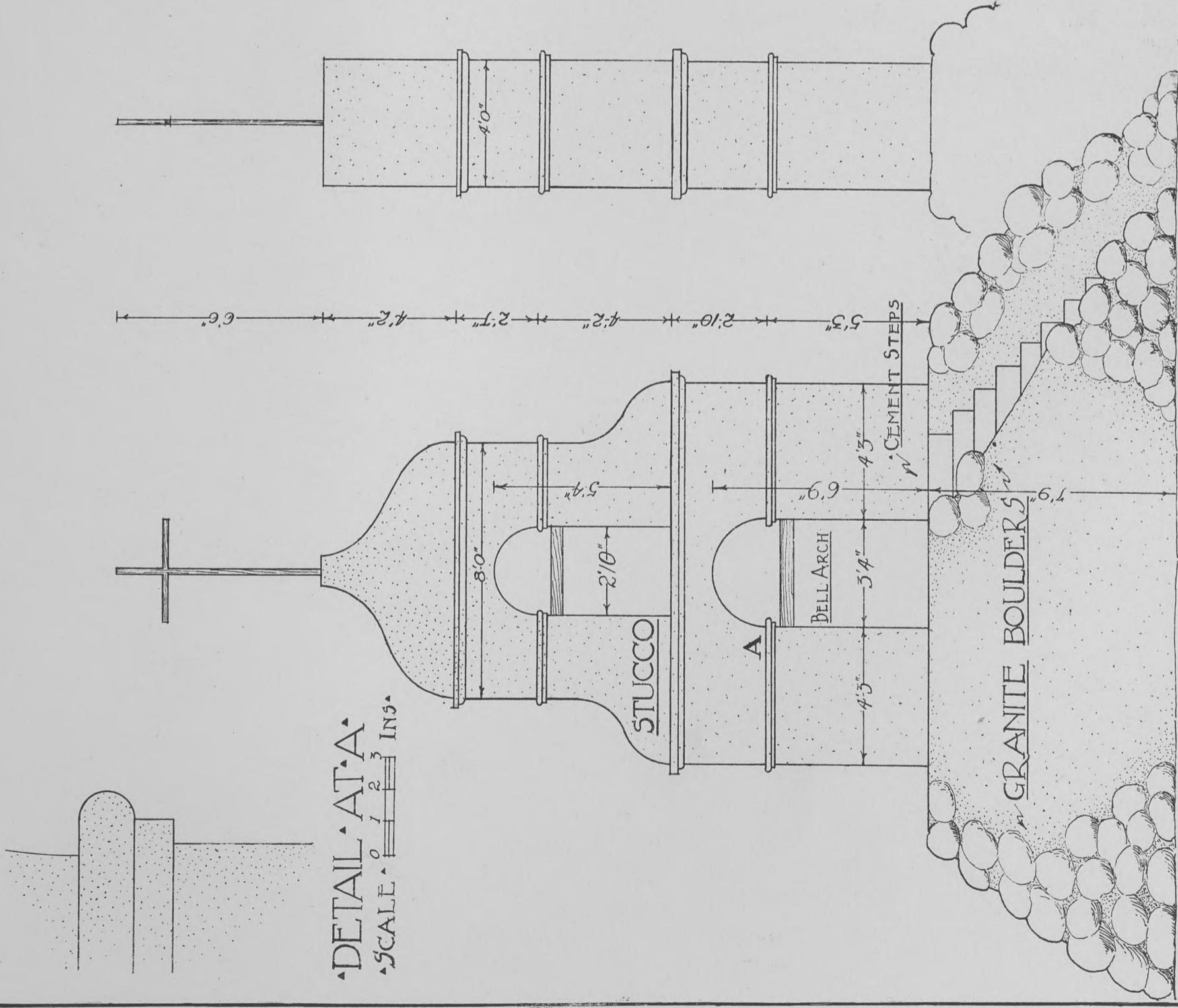


SAN BUENA VENTURA - SIDE DOOR




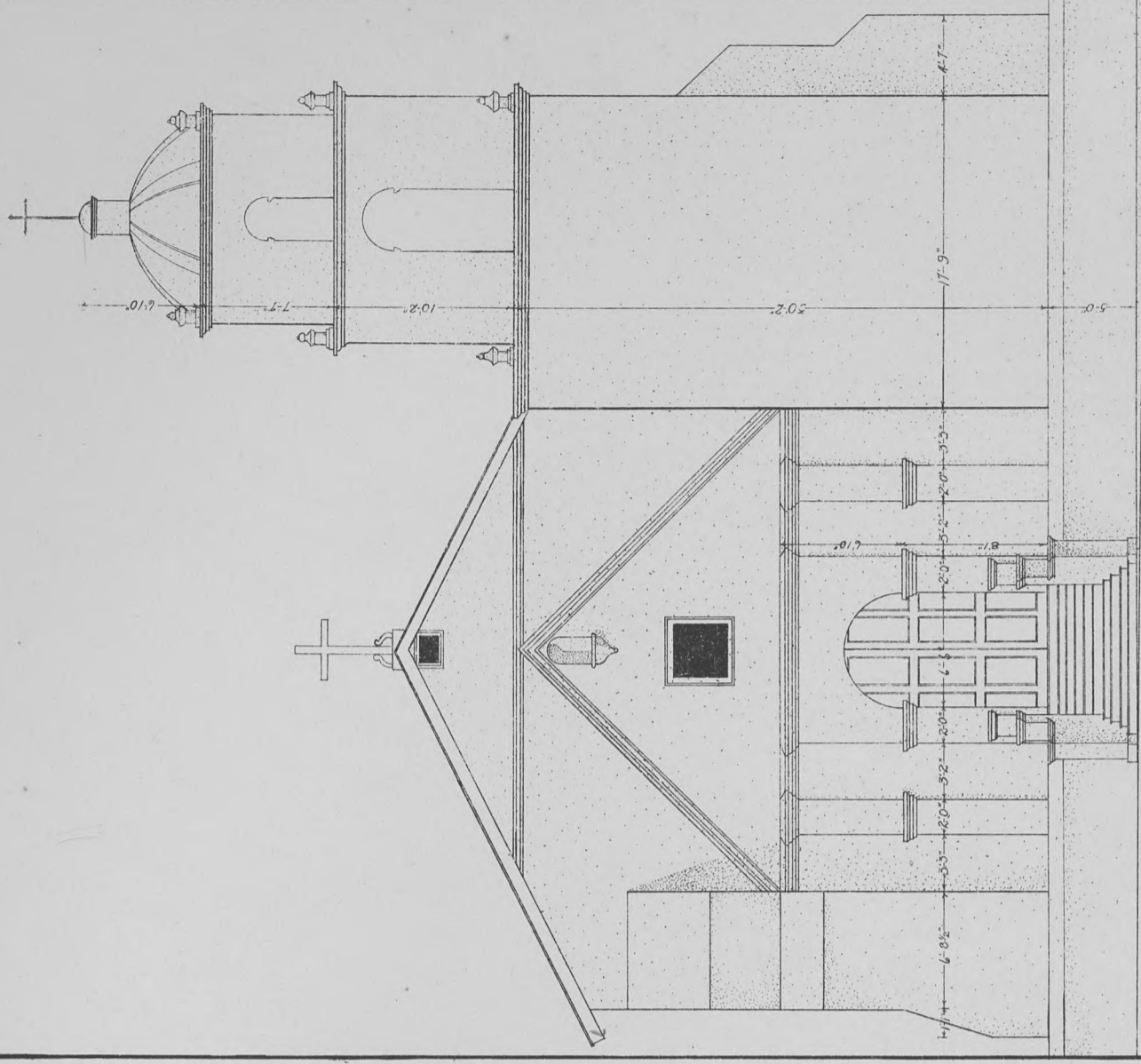
PALA CHAPEL - CAMPANILE





CAMPANILE • SAN ANTONIO DE PALA •

▲ SCALE ▲  F.T. ▲ MATERIAL ▲ BRICK ▲



MISSION • SAN • BUENAVENTURA •

MATERIAL: ADOBE: BRICK.

SCALE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 FT.

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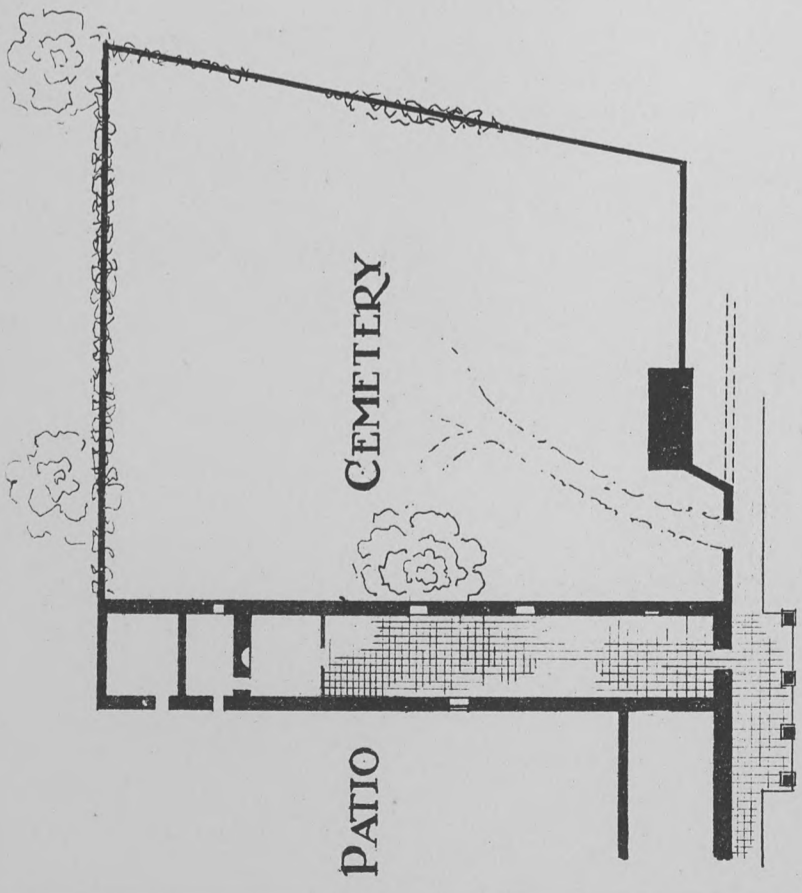
LIBRARY

1911

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

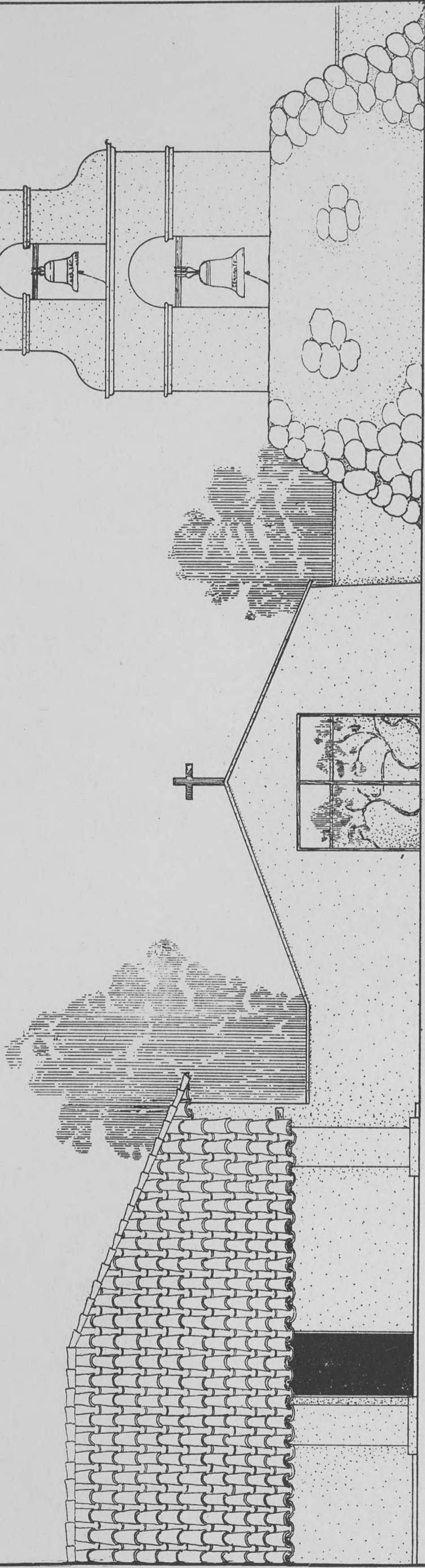
LIBRARY

1911



* S^N LUIS REY * STA. CLARA TULALIA * NTRA. LUZ *
N:PS. S^N FRANCISCO DE ASIS
SANTUS IMMORTALIS MICEPERA NOBIS
AN. D. 1816. J^R
CERVANTES NOS FECIT
INSCRIPTION: LOWER BELL

PLAN
SCALE 0 10 20 30 40 FT



* SAN ANTONIO DE PALA *
* MATERIALS: BRICK: ADOBE: STONE *
* SCALE FOR ELEVATION 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 FT *

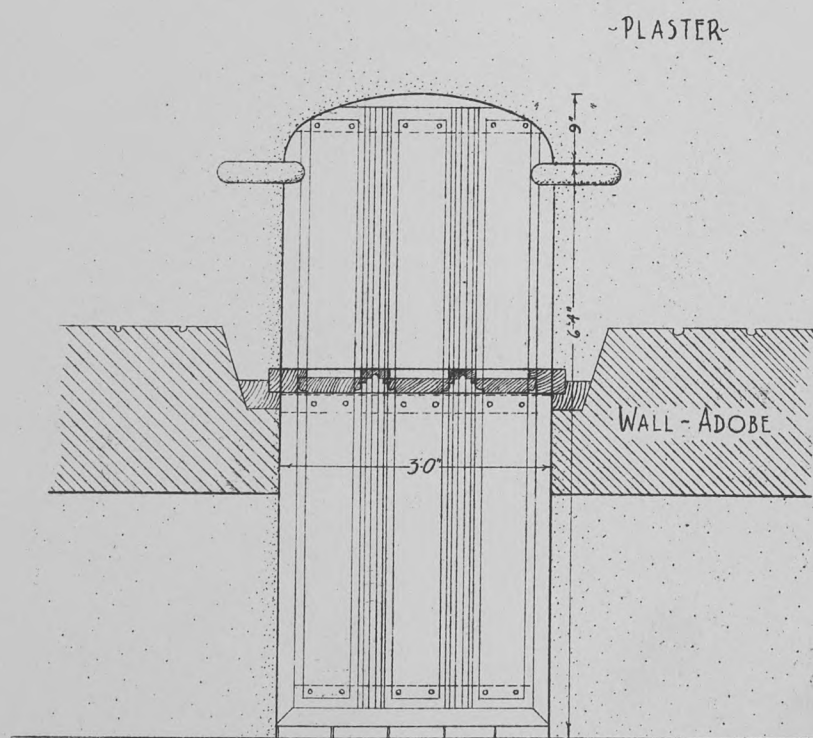
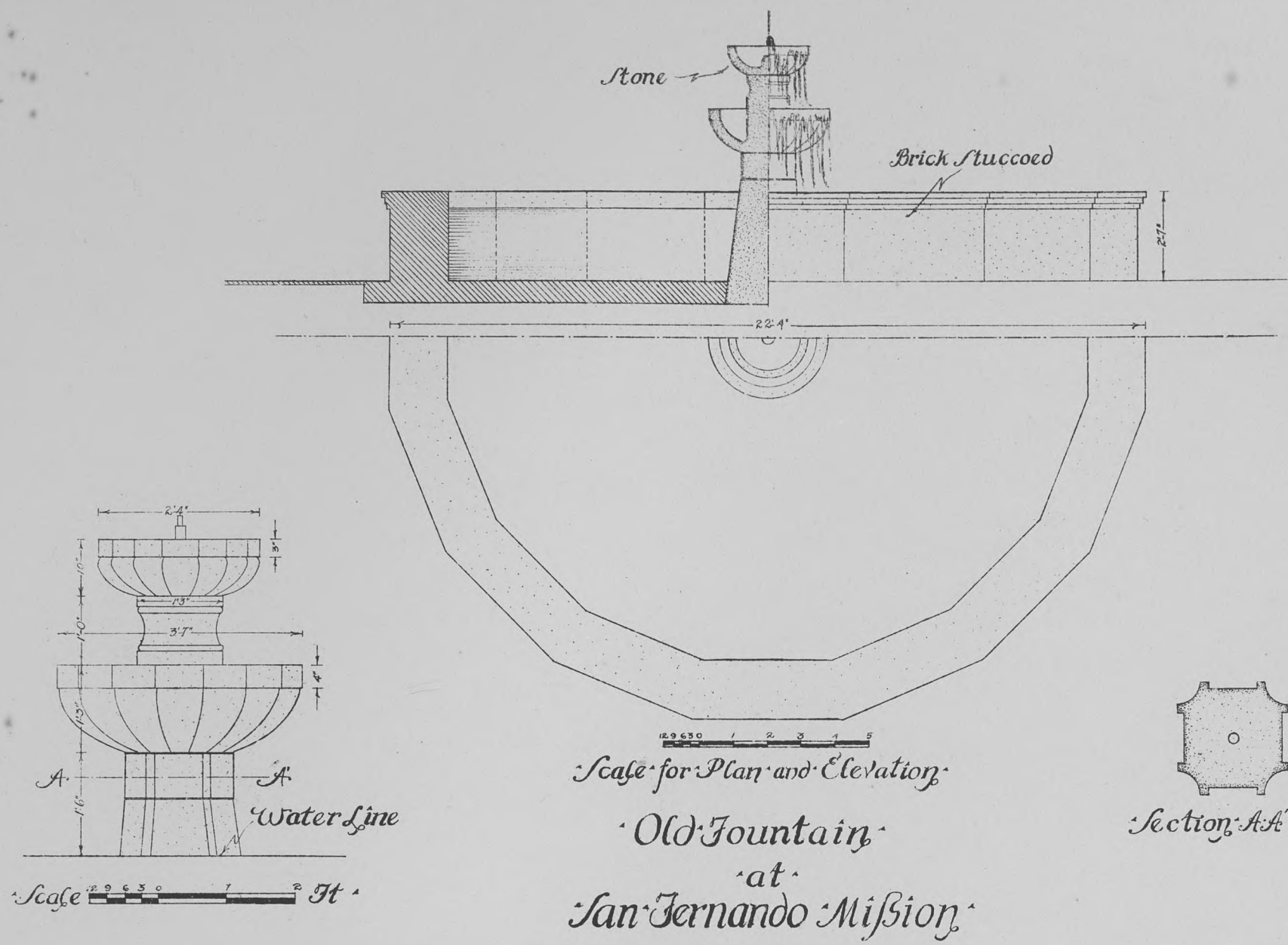




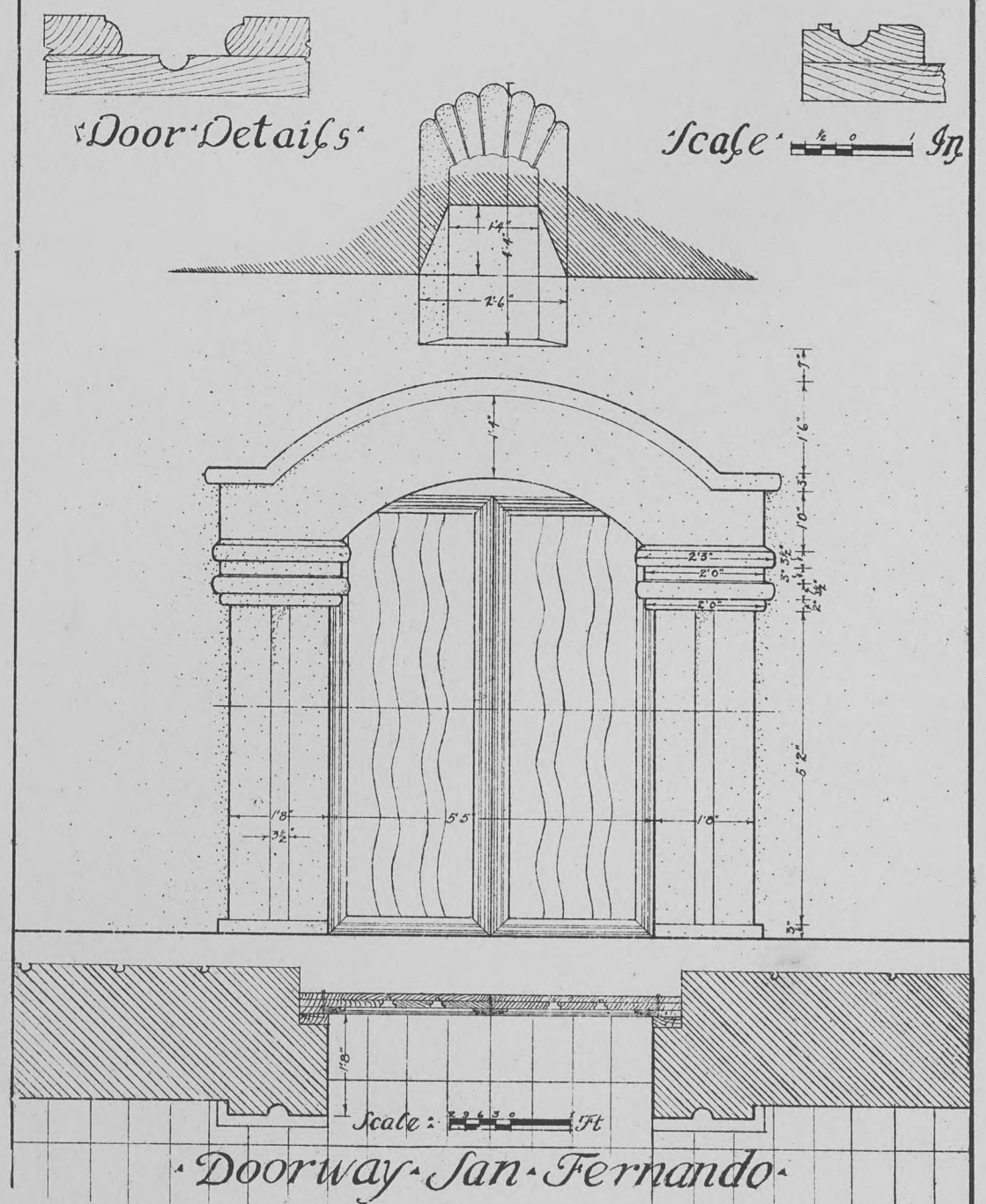
SAN FERNANDO REY DE ESPAGNA - MISSION



SAN FERNANDO REY DE ESPAGNA - CORRIDORS OF MONASTERY

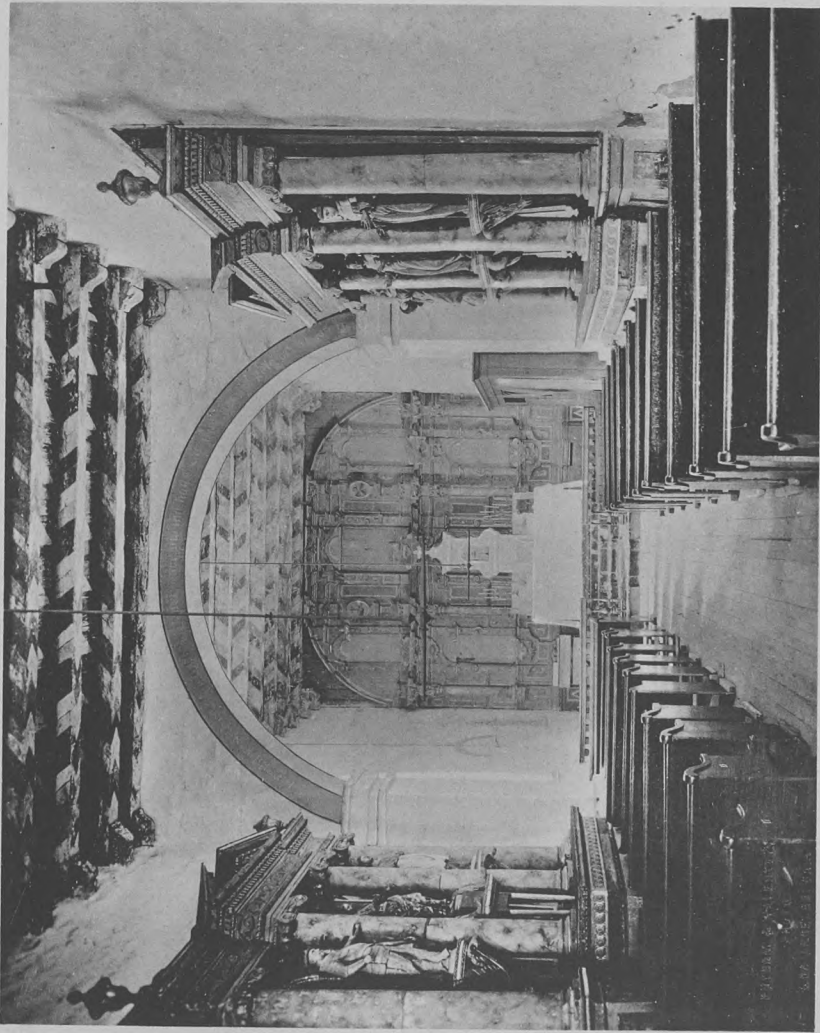


DOORWAY
SAN FERNANDO REY
MATERIAL - BRICK
SCALE 0 3 6 9 12 15 INS

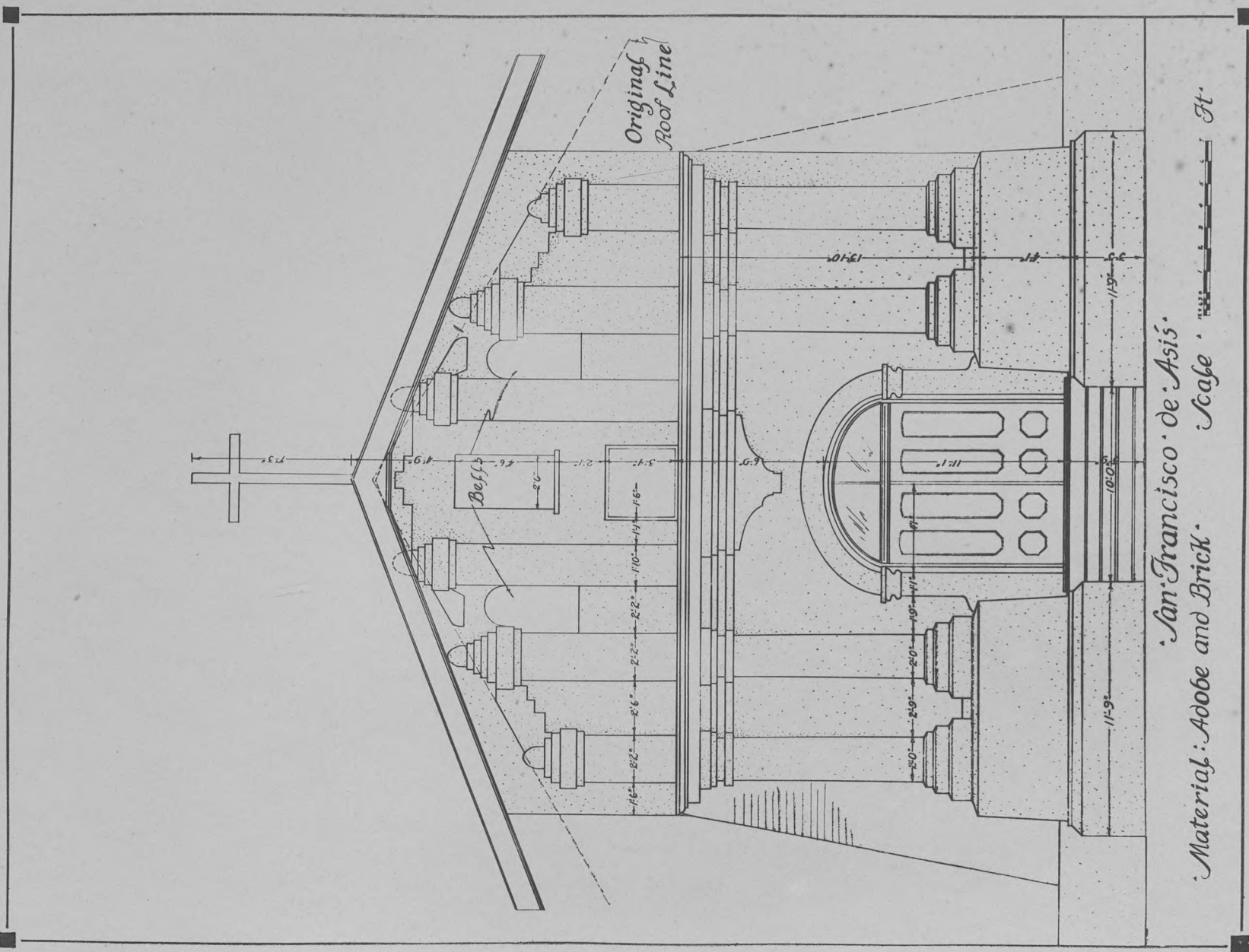




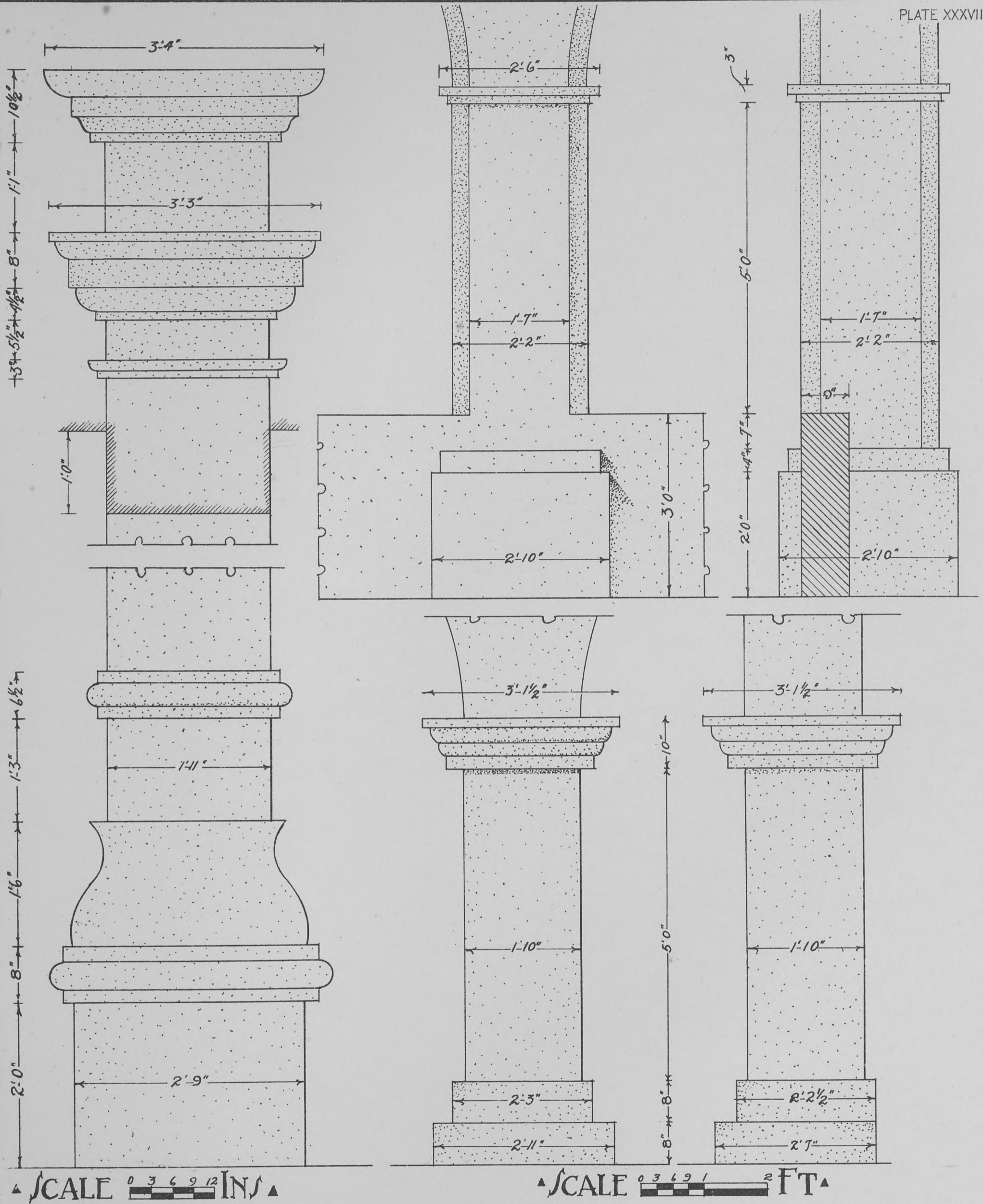
FACADE



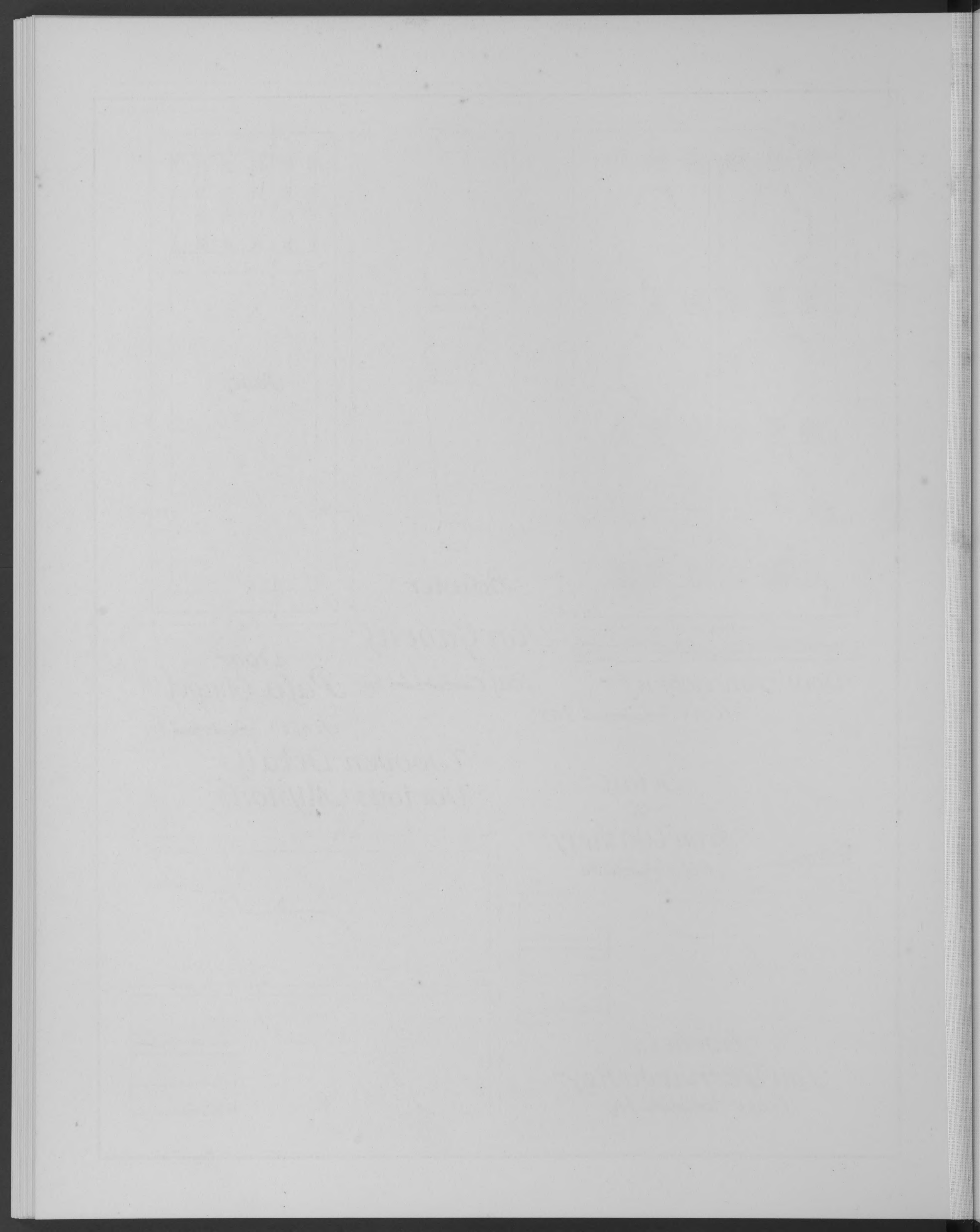
INTERIOR

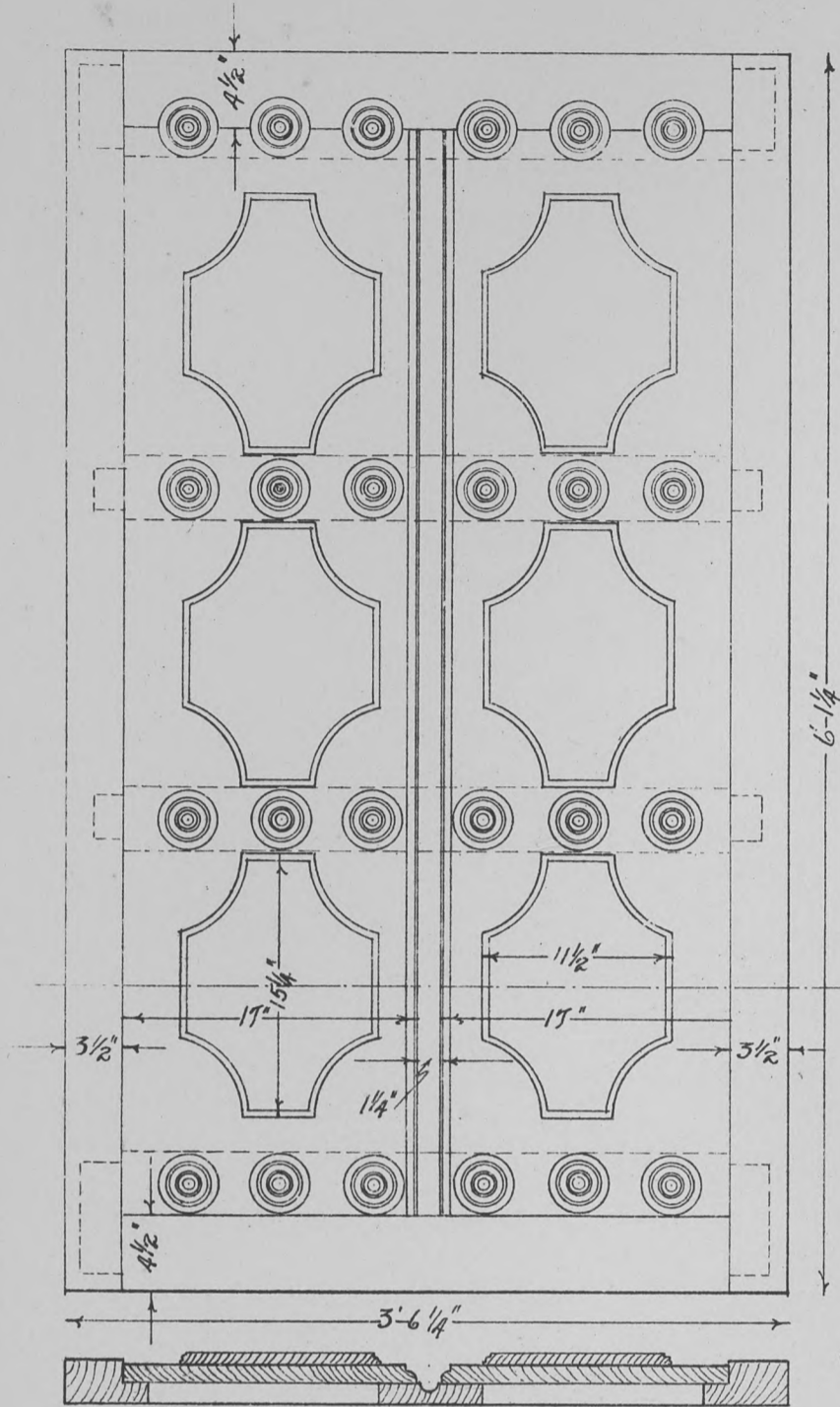


SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS (DOLORES) - MISSION

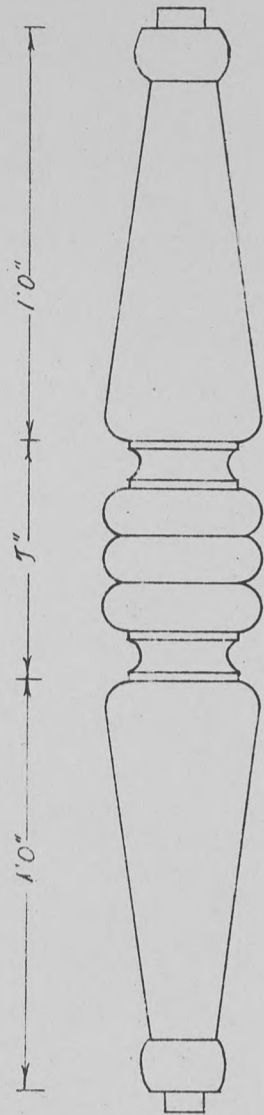


PIERS AND PILASTERS
 MATERIAL BRICK



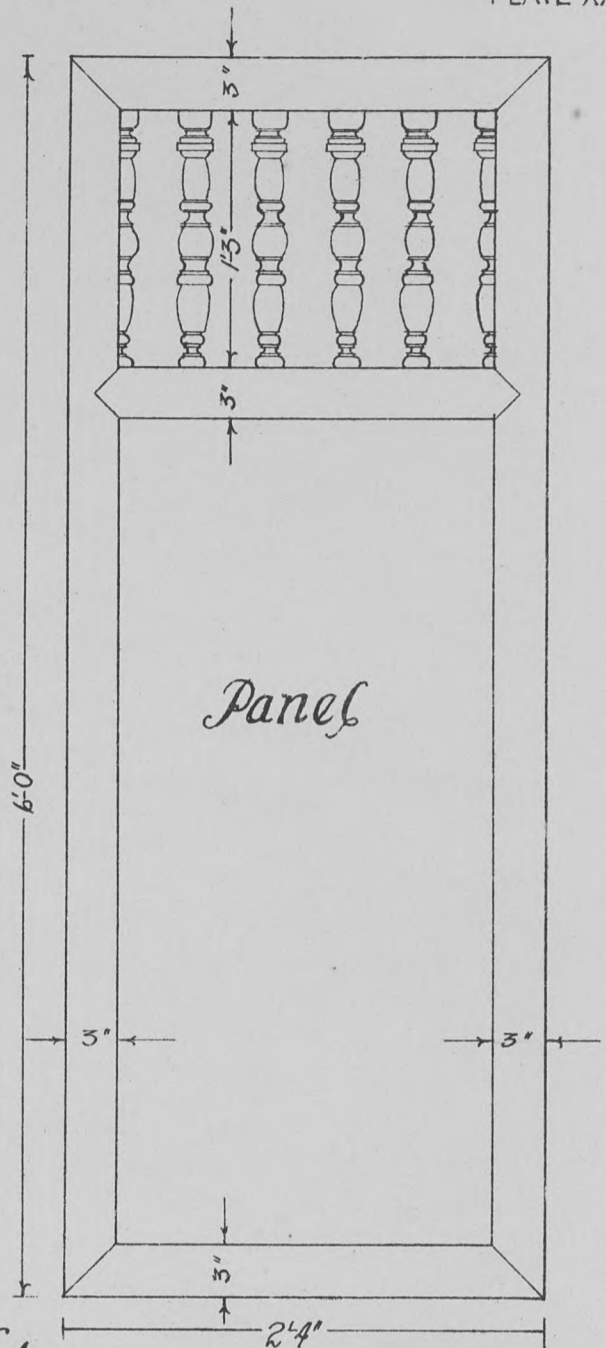


'Door' San'Gabriel
Scale 0 3 6 9 12 Ins

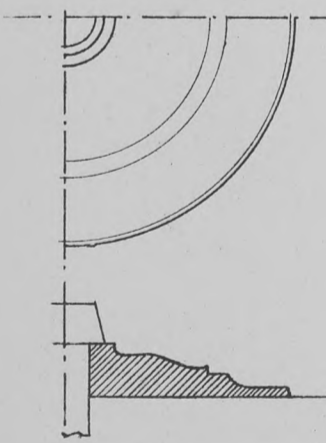


'Baluster'

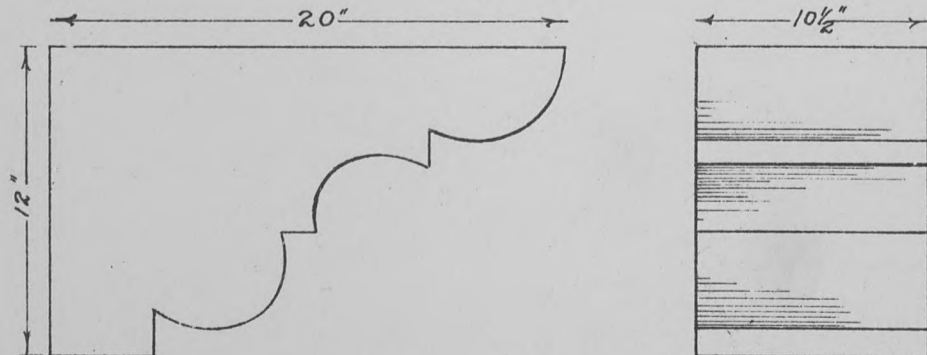
'San'Gabriel'



Door
'Pasa'Chapel
Scale 0 3 6 9 12 Ins

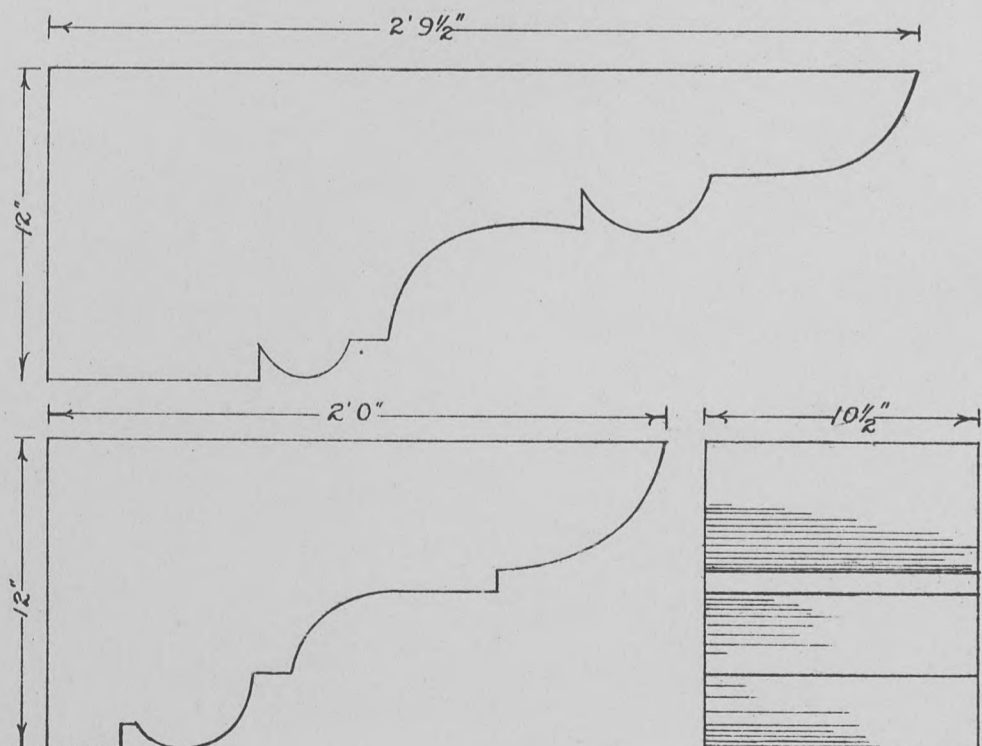


'Detail'
of
'Iron'Washer
Scale 0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 In



'Corbels'
'San'Fernando'Rey
Scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ins

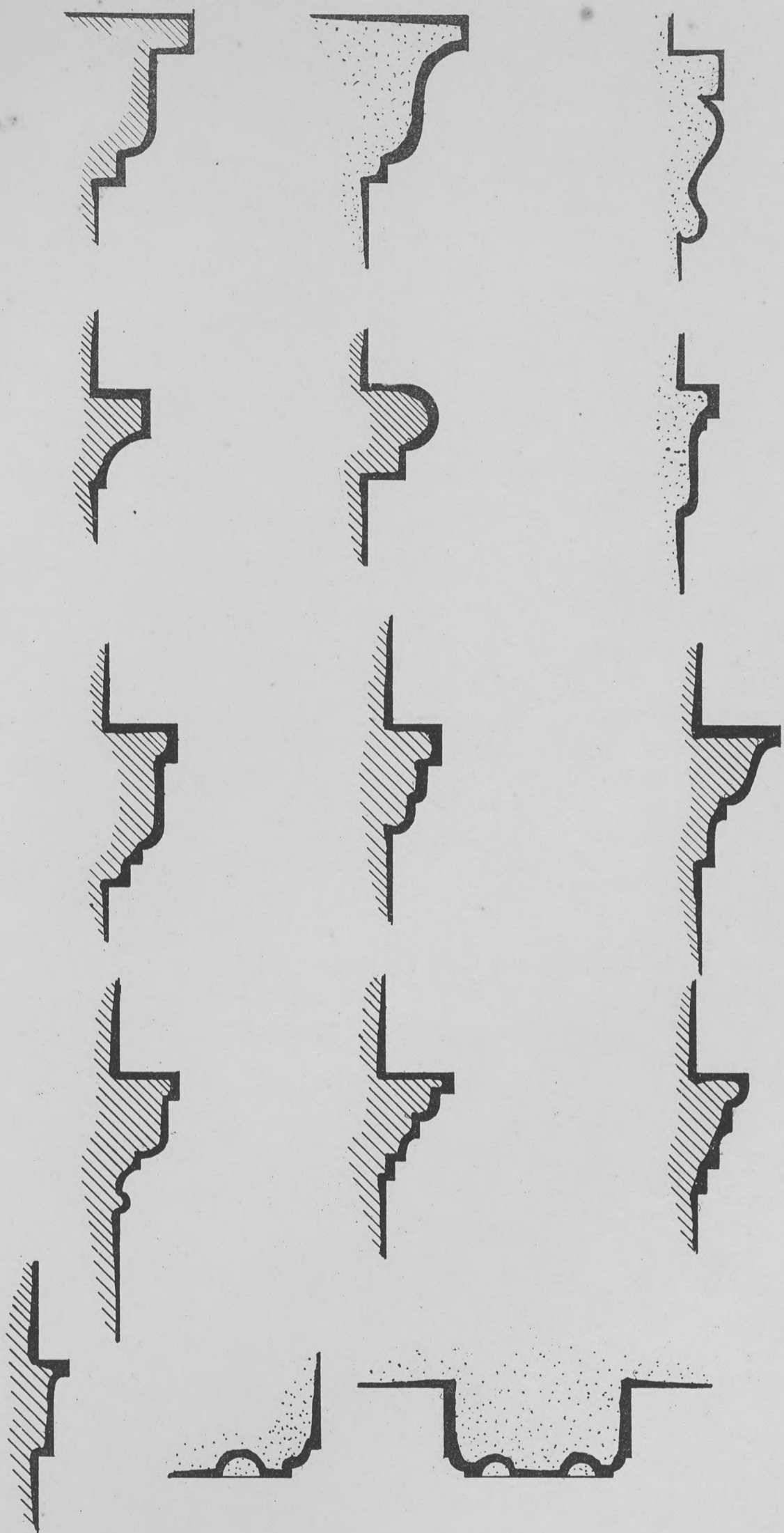
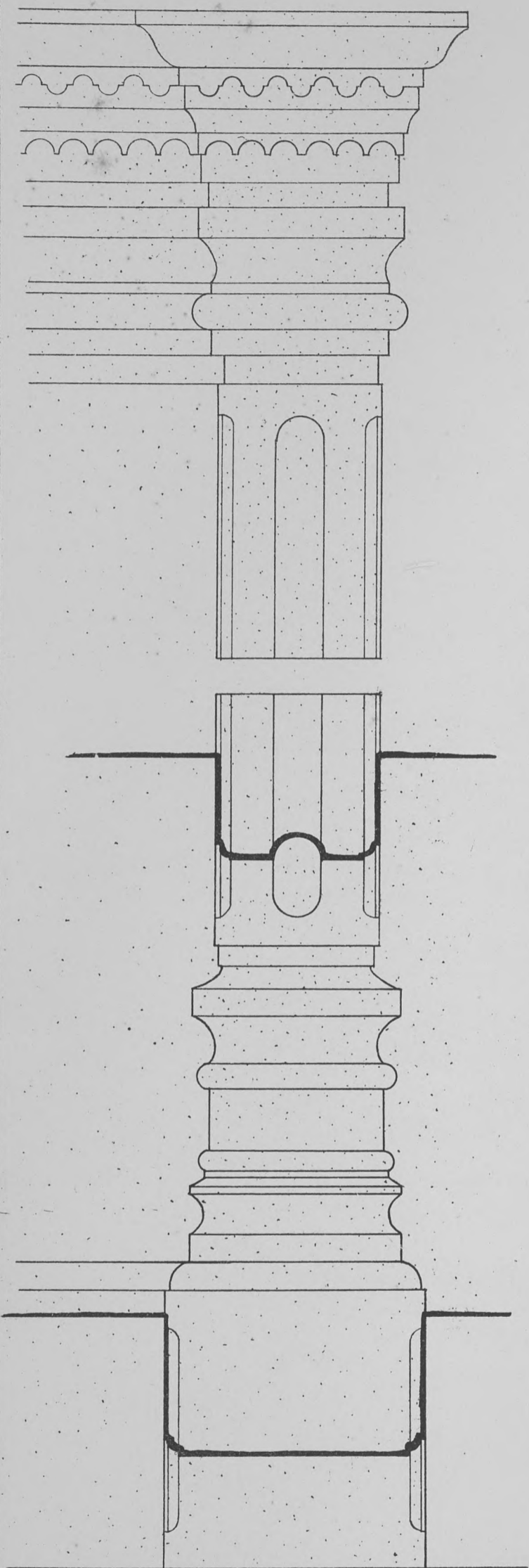
'Wooden'Details'
'Various'Missions'





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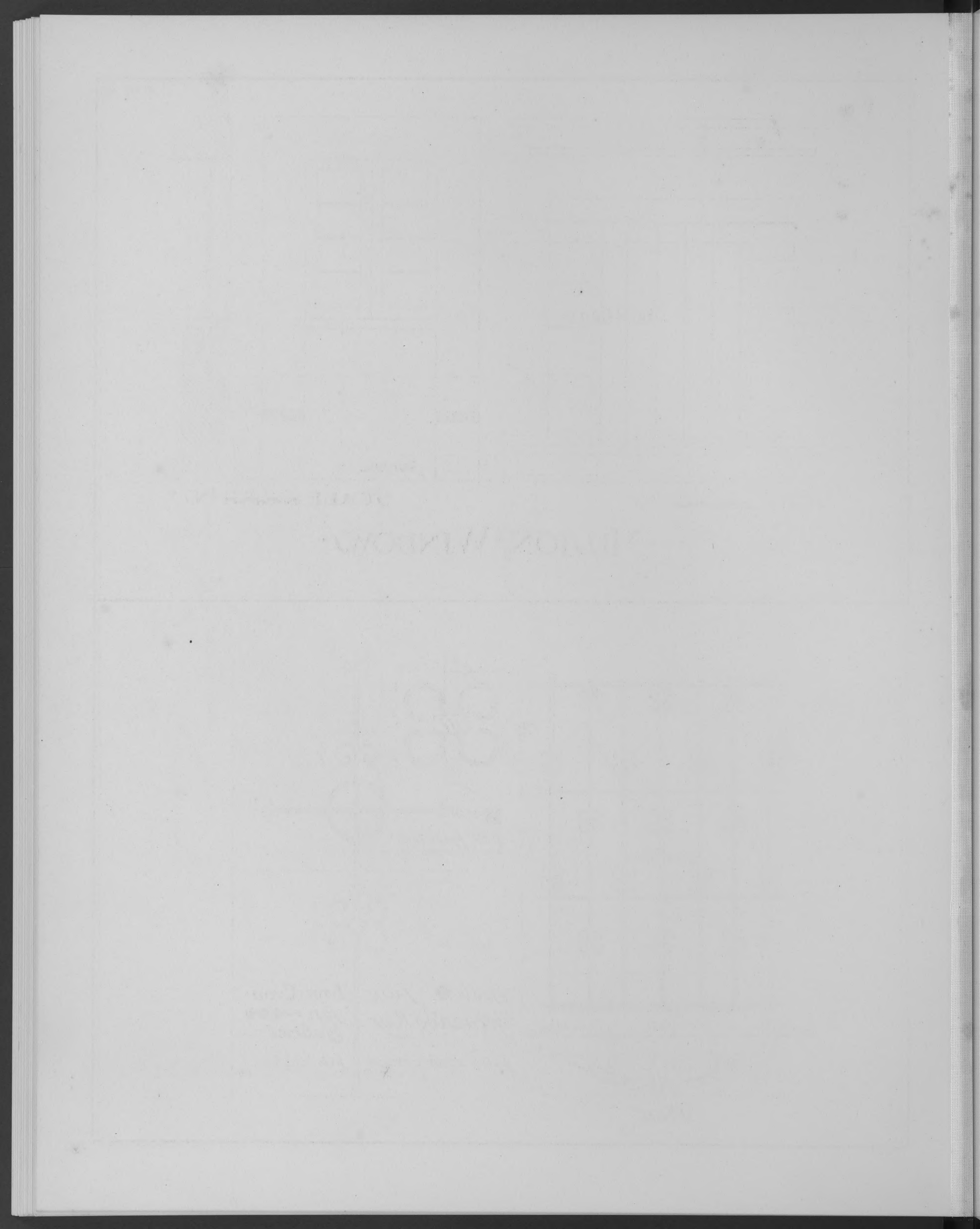
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

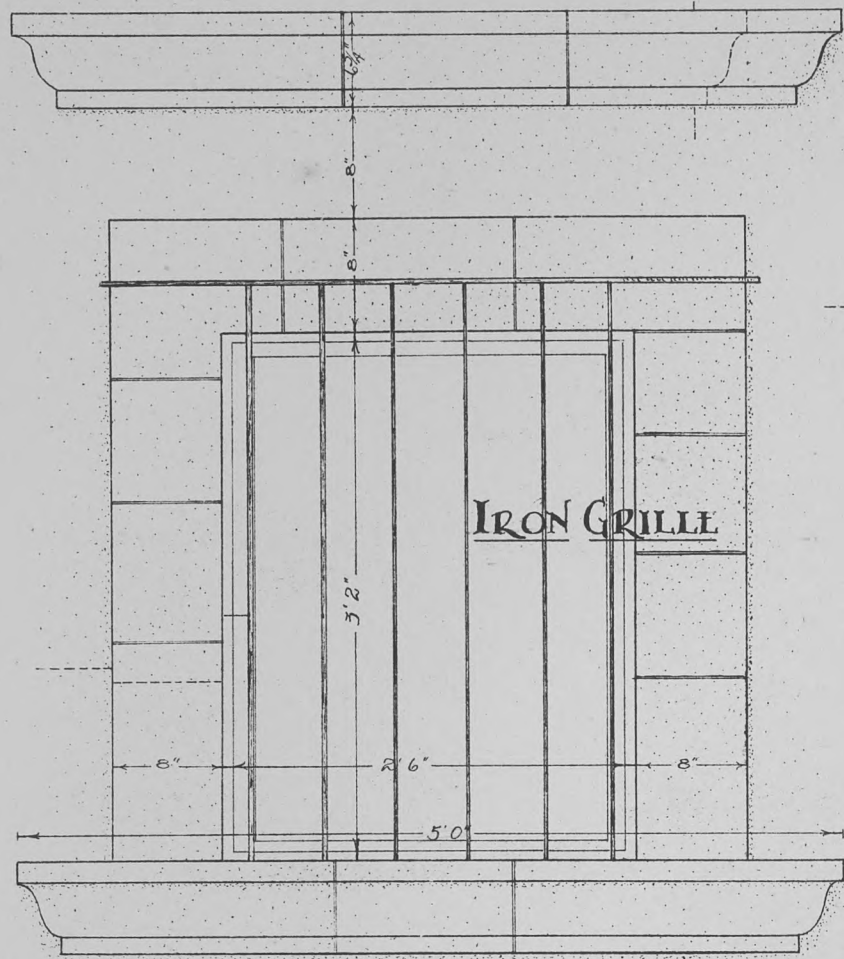


▲ MISSION ▲ MOULDINGS ▲

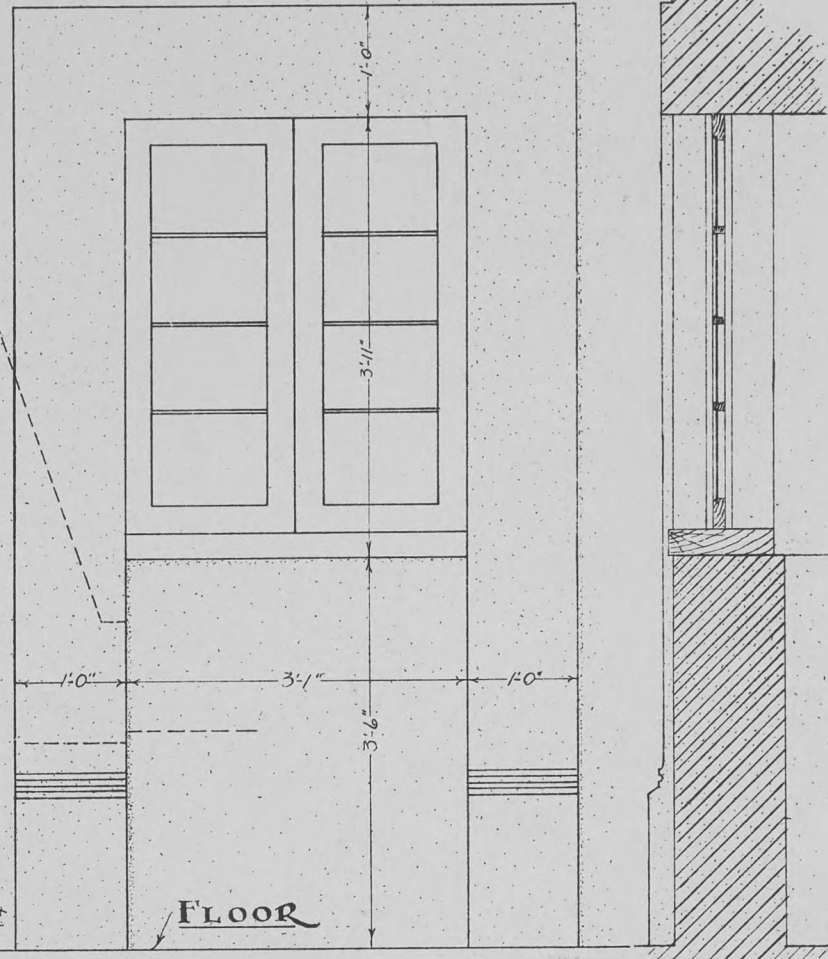
▲ VARIOUS MATERIALS ▲

▲ SCALE $\frac{1}{8}$ 9 6 3 0 1 2 3 Ft ▲



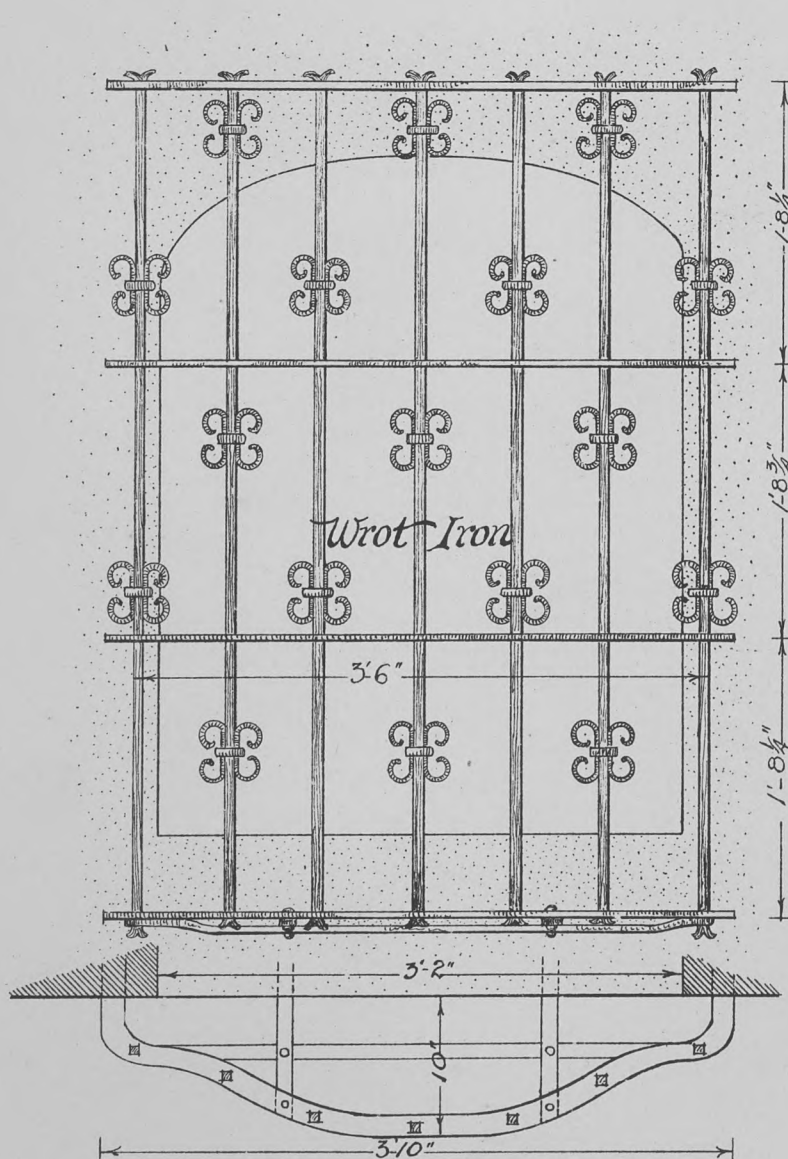


SCALE 0 3 6 9 12 15 IN

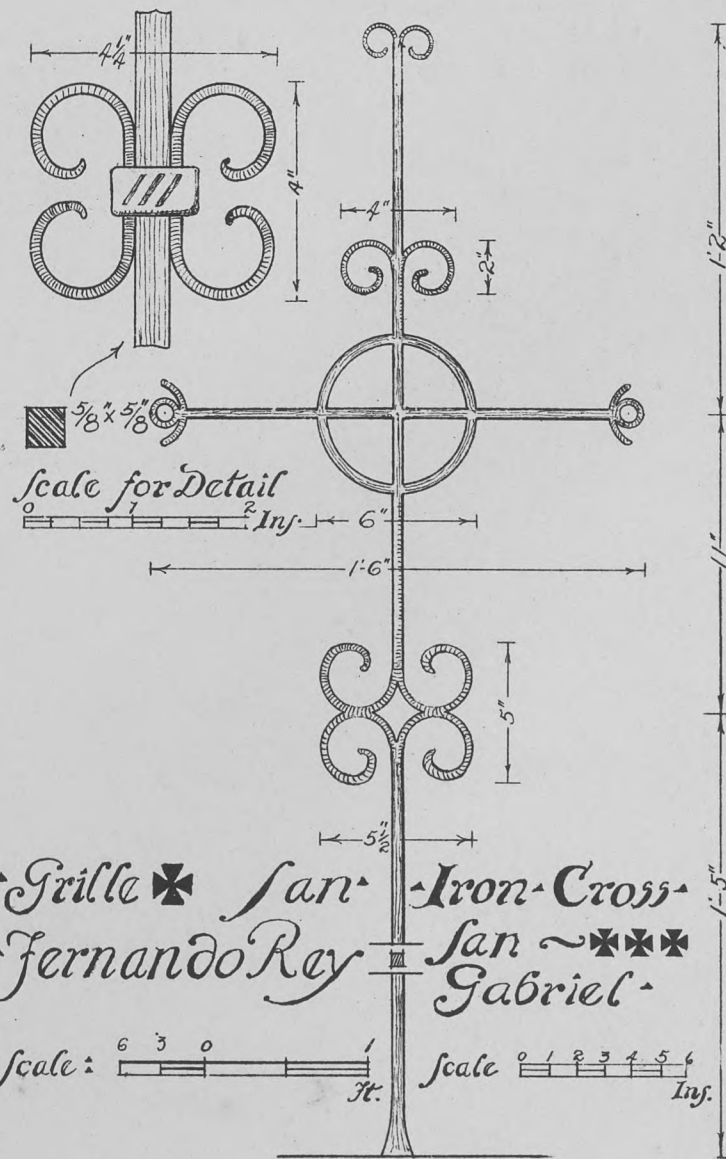


SCALE 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 IN

MISSION WINDOWS

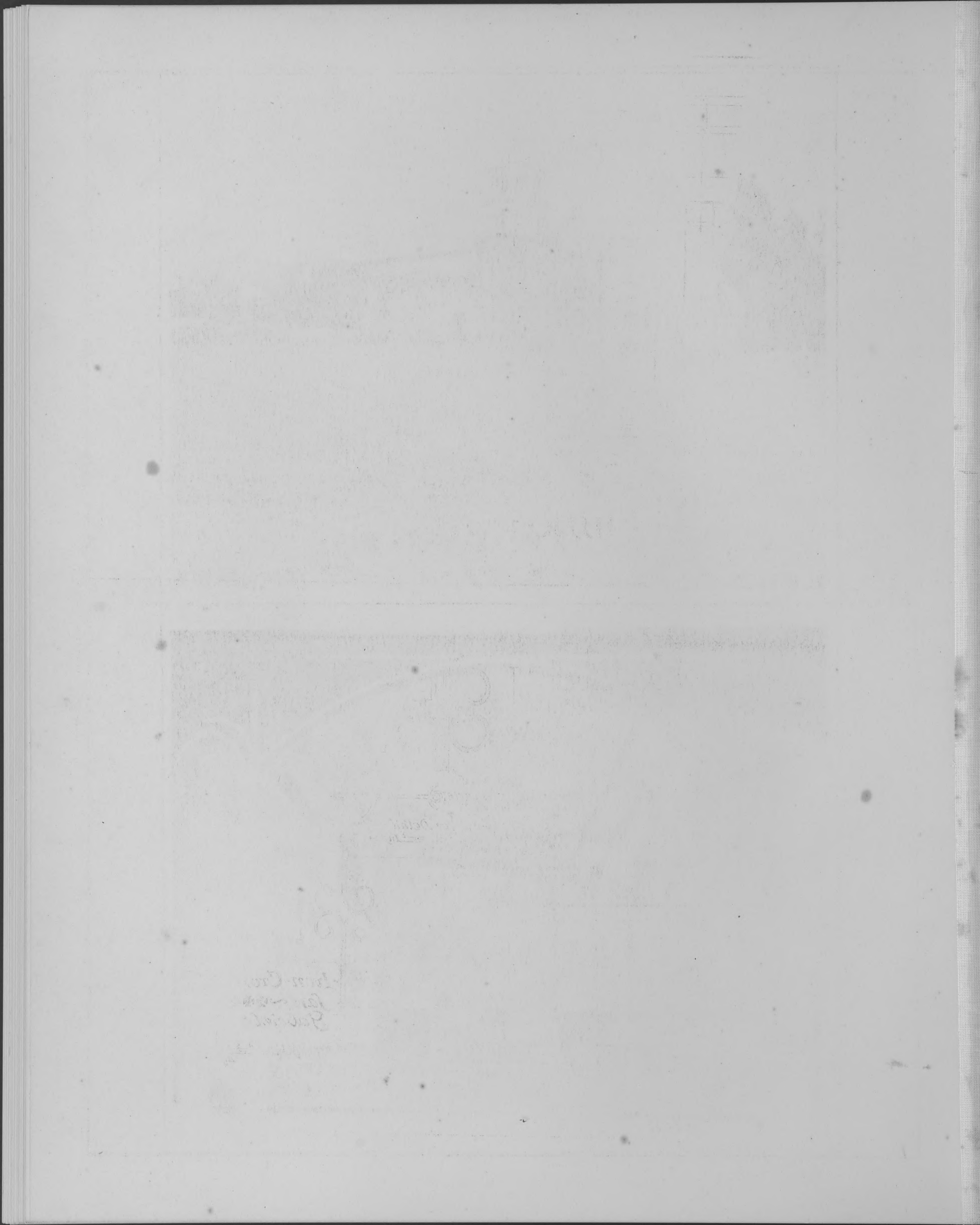


Plan



Grille ✱ San Fernando Rey ✱ Iron Cross ✱
 ✱ Gabriel ✱

Scale: 0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 IN





SAN LUIS REY - MISSION



SANTA CLARA DE ASIS - INTERIOR

438
m

